


**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATION
HEARING RECORD**

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. Suite 116, Washington, D.C. 20004

TO: Nyasha Smith, Secretary of the Council

FROM: Councilmember Anita Bonds 
Chairperson, Committee on Housing and Executive Administration

DATE: February 28, 2022

SUBJECT: B24-0419 No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021

Dear Ms. Smith,

Attached is the hearing record for the Public Hearing that the Committee on Housing and Executive Administration held on February 14, 2022 on B24-0419 No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021. Included are: (1) a list of witnesses who testified at the hearing, (2) a list of all who submitted written testimony to the Committee along with copies of the written testimony, and (3) copies of the hearing notice and the agenda and witness list.

The following witnesses testified at the public hearing, in alphabetical order of last names:

Public Witnesses:

1. Martha Assefa
2. Joon Bang
3. Dorothy Douglas
4. Wanda Dudley
5. Beatrice Evans
6. Frank Finamore
7. Fleurian Filkins
8. Andra Henderson
9. Winnie Huston
10. Melissa Jensen
11. Becca Kahn
12. George Kerr III
13. Carmelita Lacey
14. Lucie Lebois
15. Eva Lucero
16. Alys MacClellan

17. Alexander Moore
18. Marian Peele
19. Kathy Pointer
20. Linda Popejoy
21. Michele Tingling-Clemmons
22. Raymond Tolson
23. Beverley Wheeler
24. Joan Williams
25. Virgil Young
26. Karen Zuckerstein

Government Witness:

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Laura Newland | Director, DACL |
| 2. Melisa Byrd | Senior Deputy Director, DHCF |
| 3. Michael Ribar | Deputy Administrator, DHS |

The following witnesses submitted written testimony, in alphabetical order of last names:

1. Anonymous
2. Martha Assefa
3. Kimberly Baggelaar
4. Joon Bang
5. Ana Beltran
6. Carol Bluestone
7. Elisa Braver
8. Susan Cohen
9. Austin Doyle
10. Wanda Dudley
11. Beatrice Evans
12. Julia Farber
13. Yvonne Farrell
14. Steph Gerard
15. Andra Henderson
16. Emily Hovermale
17. Winnie Huston
18. Melissa Jensen
19. Becca Kahn
20. Sharon Kaplan
21. Joanna Kendig
22. George Kerr III
23. Jooeun Kim
24. Aniali Kumar
25. Carmelita Lacey

26. Lucie Lebois & Alys MacClellan
27. Eva Lucero
28. Alexander Moore
29. Marian Peele
30. Melissa Phillips
31. Linda Popejoy
32. Kenlee Ray
33. Nancy Shiner
34. Michele Tingling-Clemmons
35. Joan Williams
36. Virgil Young
37. Karen Zuckerstein

Government of the District of Columbia
Department of Aging and Community Living



Testimony of
Laura Newland
Executive Director

Public Hearing On

Bill 24-419, “No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021”

Before the
Committee on Housing and Executive Administration
Council of the District of Columbia
The Honorable Anita Bonds, Chairperson

Monday, February 14, 2022

10:00 A.M.

Good afternoon, Chairperson Bonds, members of the Committee on Housing and Executive Administration, and Committee staff. My name is Laura Newland, and I'm the Director of the Department of Aging and Community Living (DACL). I am pleased to provide testimony on Bill 24-419, the "No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021." With me today is Jessica Smith, who is the Chief Program Officer at DACL, as well as a Senior Advisor to Deputy Mayor of Health and Human Services and Director of the Department of Health Care Finance, Wayne Turnage.

The mission of DACL is to advocate, plan, implement, and monitor programs in health, education, and social services for the elderly; to promote longevity, independence, dignity, and choice for aged District residents, District residents with disabilities regardless of age, and caregivers; to ensure the rights of older adults and their families, and prevent their abuse, neglect, and exploitation; to uphold the core values of service excellence, respect, compassion, integrity, and accountability; and to lead efforts to strengthen service delivery and capacity by engaging community stakeholders and partners to effectively leverage resources.

Before I get started, I'd like to thank Mayor Bowser for her leadership. Combatting the interrelated issues of isolation and senior hunger has been a focus for our Mayor since she took office. Since I came into my role in 2015, we've invested more than \$8M annually in food alone, and in FY2020 we more than doubled those investments to respond to the Public Health Emergency. Mayor Bowser continues to make food access a top priority throughout her administration and has launched several initiatives to expand food options and choices for residents across the District. This includes a \$58 million Food Access Fund with the goal of eradicating food deserts and creating more employment opportunities. The FY22 Budget Support



Act changed the Supermarket Tax Credit to focus eligibility to areas most in need of grocery stores, expand support to more fresh food retailers, and add community engagement requirements for grocers. Mayor Bowser's investments prioritize equitable food access, particularly in Wards 7 and 8. As a result, more than 162,000 residents will gain food access points within one mile of their home. Yet, we know that there continues to be more work ahead for all of us if we are to end senior hunger in the District.

Madam Chair, according to a 2019 study by Feeding America, DC has the highest rate of senior hunger in the nation, with 13.5 percent of seniors reporting that they are food insecure. We also know that the past two years have likely only exacerbated this inequity. In a city like ours, with a Mayor who is committed to inclusive prosperity for every resident, with strong leadership and investments into programs that help our residents thrive, one senior going hungry is one senior too many. We can do better. As we continue to work together to ensure an equitable recovery for all residents in all eight wards, ending senior hunger continues to be a top priority for Mayor Bowser and for DACL.

Senior hunger is a highly complex issue. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food insecurity as a lack of consistent access to enough food for an individual to lead an active and healthy life. Although hunger and food insecurity are closely related, they are distinct concepts. While not every person experiencing food insecurity is hungry, we never want a senior to wonder where their next meal is coming from, or need to replace healthy food options with cheaper, unhealthy options.

In January 2022, DACL brought our Home-Delivered Meal program, previously run by Lead Agency grantees, into the agency. Over the last several months, we have built an internal nutrition services team, led by Ms. Paulett Costley, who previously worked in the senior service



network and brings decades of experience in the District's nutrition space to the agency, and her nine very capable and committed staff members. The team got to work right away, assessing the 1,300 seniors who still remained on the COVID Emergency Meal list, transitioning them to long-term programs that best fits their needs. They've also spent time meeting with other local agencies and nonprofit partners, including DC Central Kitchen, Mary's Center, We Are Family, and Hungry Harvest to discuss possible ways to collaborate as we move forward. In addition to these activities, our team is regularly participating in meetings with the Office of Planning's Food Policy Council, a coalition of food leaders and government representatives appointed by the Mayor to drive policy towards a more equitable, healthy, and sustainable food system in the District. Government members include the Department of Human Services, DC Health, Office of the State Superintendent of Education, Department of Small and Local Business Development, Department of Energy and Environment, and the DC Office of Planning along with several non-profit and private entities that operate in the food space. The Office of the Attorney General, DC Public Schools, and the Department of Healthcare Finance also regularly participate in meetings along with DACL.

As DACL's new in-house nutrition team continues to build capacity, we are excited to explore ways to expand our service offerings beyond our current congregate dining sites and Home-Delivered Meals program to ensure we are meeting each senior's unique needs. In FY21, DACL worked with Mary's Center to pilot a new senior nutrition program called Eat Well, Live Better! This program links medical care, nutrition, and social supports to improve health outcomes for low-income seniors with chronic health conditions. Participants receive grocery box deliveries twice a month as well as individualized nutrition education and coordinated care



with their healthcare providers. Mayor Bowser has invested \$646,000 to continue this pilot program into 2022.

While DACL provides daily meals at more than 40 community dining sites throughout the city and weekly meal delivery to homebound clients through our Home-Delivered Meals delivery program, we know that there are still innovative ways to better meet seniors at their point of need. This fiscal year, the Mayor invested a total of \$850,000 for senior villages throughout the city to expand and diversify their membership and their programmatic offerings, including food access, and \$2.5 million to launch hyper-local, neighborhood-based socialization hubs to increase outreach to older adults. DACL worked closely with our lead agencies to develop unique plans for their neighborhoods that would combat senior isolation and end senior hunger. These plans include mobile food pantries, shuttles to grocery stores, pop-up community events that feature programming and food distribution as well as connection to long-term nutrition programs, senior farmers markets and a redesign of the community dining experience. We're very excited to see what happens over this next year and how these hyper local strategies move the needle in the right direction on senior hunger.

But we know that regardless of how great our programs are, it won't matter if seniors don't know how to access them. DACL uses a multichannel outreach strategy to connect and engage with a diverse range of older adults. We participate in hundreds of outreach events annually in all eight wards (over 200 events pre-pandemic and more than 150 in-person, virtual, and hybrid activities during the pandemic, on an annual basis), including high profile Mayoral events such as the Mayor's Annual Holiday Celebrations and Senior Symposiums, monthly printed newsletters distributed at sites throughout the city, social media and electronic newsletters, earned local and national media coverage, and engaging our active network of



DACL ambassadors on a regular basis. In addition to these activities, DACL, in partnership with our grantees, provide regular programming in all eight wards delivered online, in person, and in a hybrid model to reach more residents. Madam Chair, I'm also excited to announce that starting March 1st, we will be resuming in-person activities and dining at all six senior wellness centers and 40 community dining sites.

As we move forward, we want to ensure that our decisions are driven by data, research, and best practices, on a local and national level. In November, we partnered with George Washington University to analyze our current nutrition program data. Before we made any changes, we wanted to know who we were serving with our programs. We're looking forward to learning more about how our programs have impacted the lives of our participants and where there is opportunity to improve. In order to achieve these goals, we recently entered into a data sharing agreement with DC Health and are sharing program data to identify overlaps and gaps in nutrition services in order to ensure that every resident has access to the most appropriate program to meet their individual needs. We are also working with the Office of Contracts and Procurement to issue a solicitation for a partner who will conduct an in-depth review of the prevailing reasons behind the issue of senior hunger in the District. The first phase of this contract, to be completed in Fiscal Year 22, will consist of a discovery and awareness phase which will include research with national leaders in the senior hunger space, feedback from seniors in the District (both those who currently access programs and those who don't), and an assessment of the community at large which will include holding in-depth conversations with community partners (both who directly work in senior nutrition and those who don't).

Madam Chair, the Mayor and DACL are fully committed to using every tool in our toolbox to end senior hunger, not tomorrow, not next year, but now. Over the past year alone,



we've restructured our Lead Agency model, brought case management into the agency, built an internal nutrition services team, launched an innovative pilot program, all while responding to the immediate needs of our residents during the public health emergency, which included growing our home delivered meals programs from about 2,400 unique clients pre-pandemic to nearly 7,000 clients during the height of the public health emergency. Yet, we know that the work that lies ahead of us is monumental and will require a thoughtful, coordinated, community-driven approach, backed by research.

I think we can all agree that much of the commitment, partnership, and work that Bill 24-419 seeks is already underway. Our Mayor has made significant investments in increasing food access across the District and continues to support DACL and our sister agencies in pursuing creative approaches to end senior hunger. Ending senior hunger is a topic that aligns all of us—the Mayor, the Council, non-profits, and community members. Coming together as a community and using an innovative, data-driven approach, will be vital to addressing this urgent need. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. We are happy to answer any questions you might have.



In the last two years, I went from being 68 to 70. I attempted to get food in the District of Columbia but did not qualify even though I lost my job during the pandemic and had cancer. Because I lost all of my benefits, I also had to apply for social security, partial Medicaid, change all of my doctors and apply for unemployment all while I was sick. Getting food was important, but my other health concerns and financial crisis was impacting severely on my life.

I tried a food bank and because I wasn't in active treatment (chemotherapy) at the time I didn't qualify for food.

I was also compromised because I had part of an organ taken out that forced me to eat only certain foods which were not provided by other resources made available to people during the pandemic.

I made an effort to get all of the documentation that was necessary for the food stamps but because I was still sick it was very difficult to do that. I had some people who were able to donate some food to me along the way and without that I don't know what I would have done.

There were many pieces of required documentation and it didn't make sense to me that so much was required before I could get food.

Recently, but months later, I made an effort to get the information together. I spoke to someone at the SNAP office who tried to help me so I could apply on line but I couldn't because I couldn't get into the system and they couldn't get me the technical assistance that I needed.

When I finally thought I had the correct information, I looked up the SNAP office online and noted that the H Street, NE, location had the worst reviews I have read in a long time. I was horrified at the thought of having to go to an agency that person after person talked about being treated rudely and abusively.

There was a New York Ave. NW, location listed so I went there instead thinking that I could avoid bad treatment. I arrived there and was told that the location was not doing SNAP and I had to go to the H Street location. When I mentioned that it was listed online the person told me that it was incorrect information.

I had to walk many blocks in freezing cold weather to get from NY Ave to H Street because I didn't have enough money for an Uber or cab.

I arrived at the building at the H Street location and waited online for maybe a half an hour observing how people coming in were being treated. There was at least one employee who definitely had a negative attitude towards most of the people waiting on line as she told people rudely where to stand and gave instructions about what clothing to take off to go through the security process. When it was my turn, I took off my jacket and placed it on the conveyor belt and then was told to take off my second jacket so I did that and it kept buzzing as I walked through. I was told to empty my pockets and I did, the buzzer went off again and I was told to empty my pockets again but I had already done that and the buzzer went off again. Frustrated, I finally spoke up and said that I had a hip replacement and knee replacement and that was probably why the buzzer was going off. The police officer let me through.

I got upstairs and was met by a very nice employee who helped me get an application and explained to me what I needed to do to also get my documents copied.

As I sat down and proceeded to read what was required, I noticed that the application asked for something that I hadn't seen on the list of documents I read originally online. I don't know if that was my fault but it was really unbelievably frustrating to finally be there and then realize that I had to go home and start all over again.

Maybe my situation was unique because of my health issues but I can't imagine that they weren't other people in DC who had health issues and had trouble getting food. I also know that there are many older people in DC who live alone and can't get to places where food is being dispensed

There needs to be a mechanism for people who need food and have health issues to get it without having to go through the challenges that I met every step of the way.

I also hope that maybe there's a way for someone to take seriously the bad treatment that people who need help have to go through in order to get it and change the H Street location into a consumer friendly environment.

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING & EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATION
NO SENIOR HUNGRY OMNIBUS AMENDMENT ACT HEARING

14 FEBRUARY 2022

TESTIMONY OF MARTHA ASSEFA

SNAP & WIC OUTREACH ASSOCIATE, D.C. HUNGER SOLUTIONS

Dear Chair Bonds and Committee Members,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify about the No Senior Hungry Act. My name is Martha and I'm a proud Ward 7 voter. I have the privilege of helping seniors apply for SNAP on behalf of DC Hunger Solutions. I bring greetings and letters from Ms. Belton, Mr. Colbert and Mr. Washington. All courageous leaders who advocate for the dire need for clear communication, a shorter SNAP application and one agency in charge of ending senior hunger.

I have an intimate window into seniors' lives across the district when I help them apply for SNAP benefits. DC Hunger Solutions is often seniors' last hope for accessing SNAP after struggling to navigate the bureaucracy. Ineffective communication is a common frustration. Mr. Colbert said, "I had no luck getting answers when I called for help." Mr. Washington stated "I had to constantly argue with everyone on the phone. Everyone was passing the buck." Ms. Belton shared "I feel like I have been trampled on while I am trying to get help." This Act's charge to develop a centralized communication plan will provide clarity over what each program does, who is in charge and how to apply. This will be common knowledge and not just for those who are connected. As a community organizer I know this will go a long way. In addition, this plan must include training for workers on how to deliver dignified customer service. As Ms. Belton shared, disrespect has lasting impacts on our health, and it must be addressed.

The current SNAP application takes one hour to complete. It is technical, invasive and requires lots of verification documents. I speak to countless seniors who got overwhelmed by the process and gave up. Other seniors like Ms. Belton applied and had their documents lost in the process. Mr. Colbert had his benefits held up by 2 months because DHS needed a copy of his social security income which they already had! Imagine both our frustration. Therefore, I am beyond ecstatic that implementing the Elderly Senior Application Project is included in the No Senior Hungry Act. It restores dignity by asking fewer questions. It also ensures DHS utilizes information from Medicare and Social Security that they already have. This will be a game changer for providers like me and seniors across DC.

I am so excited the Act names one agency, the Department of Aging and Community Living, to be in charge and effectively collaborate with the existing partners. So many seniors are in crisis and require multiple services at once. I constantly feel anxiety not knowing where to refer them for services. Being able to refer to just one agency and know that they'll take a holistic approach to helping each senior will be a big relief. This will also save the seniors time and prevent them from spinning their wheels.

I will close by sharing overwhelming support for this act that I garnered from 49 seniors at the

Mayor's Senior Holiday party. This card gives a voice to their support for this Act and their desire to care for each other. With signatures from zip codes across DC we want to become the city where no senior goes hungry. I would argue that this Act ultimately is about dignity, and it makes me hopeful and happy knowing the deep impact it will have.

D.C. Hunger Solutions believes that this legislation is a great start to ensuring that older adults in DC receive the nutrition services they deserve. We ask that the Committee work to move this legislation along for passage, funding, and implementation.

Sincerely,

Martha Assefa

massefa@dchunger.org

Please see the following 3 letters from Mr. Washington, Mr. Colbert and Ms. Belton and two images of the card that seniors signed at the Mayor's Senior Holiday Party.

Testimony for No Senior Hungry

Good morning Ms. Bonds and Committee Members,

I am a 91-year-old Veteran, a volunteer educator with AARP where I teach seniors how to protect themselves from fraud and I am an active American Legion member.

In March 2021 I got my monthly food box from Capitol Area Food Bank and there was a flier in there that talked about SNAP. I had no idea what the program was, I was curious about it, so I called DC Hunger Solutions and inquired about SNAP. Low and behold I qualified. It was an hour-long application over the phone. I received my first benefits in April 2021.

Unfortunately, I went to the hospital and when I came home, I quickly realized that I was dropped off SNAP. I did not get a letter in the mail. In October, I started calling DHS for help. I spent Thanksgiving with no SNAP. I had to constantly argue with everyone on the phone. Everyone was passing the buck. The only person who finally came through for me was DCHS. Finally, I got the best Christmas present of my back SNAP benefits. I have been able to purchase food. Food is so much more expensive, what used to cost be \$60 a week is now \$150. This money has been critical to feeding me.

The No Senior Hungry legislation would make a big difference in letting seniors know about SNAP. It will make a simpler application. Most importantly it will ensure that there is dignified communication. I thank you for your leadership in this matter.

Sincerely,

Mr. Glenn Washington

3298 Fort Lincoln Dr, NE apt 824 Washington DC 20018

Contact me with questions 202 308 8618

Testimony for No Senior Hungry

Good morning Ms. Bonds and Committee Members,

It is an honor and a privilege to be able to have a conversation with you. I have been knowing Ms. Bonds for 25 years. Now that I am in my vulnerable years, as are many other seniors, it has been very difficult and confusing to know for what help we qualify. I have spent many hours talking to several people, being put on hold, trying to get signed up for programs. It would be fantastic to talk to one person who could answer the phone and solve the problems that we run into. We are so happy you can help change this.

Lack of clear communication has been one of the biggest problems I have faced. Both in accessing SNAP and rental assistance I have received many confusing letters from different agencies who are not clear about telling me what I need to do to be accepted to the programs. It was very confusing and stressful trying to figure out what the hell was going on. I was getting acceptance and rejection letters all at the same time and I had no luck getting answers when I called for help. Eventually, I was able to talk to someone and I found out that the food stamps office held up my application for an extra month because they wanted proof of my social security income even though they can see it in their system. After all of that confusion, I finally did receive my EBT card, but it was only through sheer perseverance that this finally happened.

This needs to change! Please pass the No Senior Hungry Legislation. I have full faith in my friend Ms. Bonds and the committee to make this happen. Please pass the No Senior Hungry Legislation.

Sincerely,

Mr. Francis Darryl Colbert

7019 Georgia Ave, NW apt 507 Washington, DC 20012

Please call me with any questions 202 361 1709

Testimony for No Senior Hungry

Good morning Ms. Bonds and Committee Members,

I am sharing my story so that you can help ensure that no one else has the same experiences. Since I was 15 everyone was taking advantage me, even now. I could write two or three books about my experience as a hard worker in this country. I have worked in kitchens my whole life. In many of these jobs I often was not treated right. I have fought and won when my employer was not paying me for all my hours or paying into my social security. I even won this for other workers. My last job was at the start of the pandemic, and I was terminated for no fault of my own. From all the stress from the years I ended up in the hospital with a heart attack because of how people treated me. The stress from disrespect affects your brain, heart, and whole body. This has made it impossible for me to work now. I currently getting my limited social security retirement income even though my spouse and I both paid into social security for many years.

Up until now I never asked for help since I have been working my butt out. I have paid into these programs my whole life. Now when I am trying to get something, I am sent all over the place, only to get lost and to be given confusing answers. When I called for SNAP, this is how the workers are behaving. They cut you short on the phone all the time, they keep saying that they have no info in system. They keep beating you around. It is clear that they don't care! Yet, I consistently raised my voice asking what was going wrong and how it could be fixed. For two months I called and got no answers. I feel like I have been trampled on while I am trying to get help. I have been disrespected consistently for no reason. Where are my rights? Why are they making poor people go through too much trouble?

I have many recommendations. Start by teaching the workers on the phone respect. Teach them to help people and end the long wait times. I have had the whole day spoiled by waiting on the phone making it so that I can't do something else. Make sure that the workers are trusted and give people like me confidence in who I am talking to. I really love the idea of having one agency help seniors so that we do not have to run all over the place anymore. This is why I am so supportive of this Act. I also know that a shorter SNAP application for seniors will make a big difference. I raise my voice so that no one else gets the treatment that I had. Hang this story on the wall to remind you of this work until it finally gets done.

I thank you for your leadership,

Sincerely

Ms. Mahanna Belton

5733 5th St, NW Washington DC 20011

2026694713

Deborah Cunningham
20019

Deborah Cunningham
20019

2003

Nita Clark
20009

Karen McMillan
20020

Fred Allen
2002-562-1036

20001

Wendy
20019

Louise Miller
20020

Helen
20020

Alvin Smith
20005

Sandra
20019

No Senior Hunger

20019

Abraham
20001

Ronald Burdick
(202) 416-8077-20005

Terry Meloy
20003

20019

Alma Terrell
20019

Adina Devaia
20010-11358

20019

James Miller
20001

Arthur High
20011

Teresa & Bernard
20002

James Miller
20018

Wayne Cline
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Allyle Noddy

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Stenot BPH
20020

Blonde Chase
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Dorothy Kennedy
20032

Sylvia Burton 20017

Marian O. Williams - 20011

Winifred Holston 20012

Helen 20011

Sharon Godfrey
20002

Bob. Bailey
20011

Ruby Fraser
20001

Helen Douglas - 20003

Saundra West 20002

Dr. SHOOT
20002

Luanna L. Douglas
* MAR 5, 20002

Theresa Turner
20020

George Frazer
Bord I 20019

NO SENIOR HUNTER

Wanda Dudley 20032

Annie Bremer 20032

Made HALLIS 20011

Small - 20018

Stephanie Saunders 2002

Kitty Kohlie

2001@yahoo.com

Joseph Dingle 20079waleam

Dear DC City Council Members:

I live in Washington, DC in Ward 3 and am writing to support the No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021. I am concerned about the food-insecure seniors in DC. Only half of eligible low-income seniors now are receiving SNAP benefits, so urgent action is needed.

This bill is common sense. It requires the DC government to set up a taskforce to come up with a plan to improve outreach to seniors and address food insecurity. The bill also calls for meal-delivery services to be added to Medicaid home health care services, which is what 41 other states already have. This is important because some disabled people cannot prepare their own meals.

Here are a few suggestions for improving the bill.

1. **The bill should cover both seniors and disabled people younger than age 60.**
2. **The bill should state that the taskforce needs to develop a budget to implement its recommendations and indicate whether Department of Aging and Community Living needs additional funds to address senior food insecurity.**
3. **The bill should clarify that assessment of nutritional needs also should include consideration of whether seniors are able to order grocery services online and pay for grocery delivery services.** Providing access to Internet, providing instructions on how to order food online, and providing a supplement to cover the cost of delivery fees may be very helpful in getting food to low-income seniors or disabled people younger than age 60 who are unable to shop at grocery stores in person.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I am pleased that DC City Council members proposed this bill.

Sincerely,

Kimmy

Sent from my iPhone

Councilmember Anita Bonds, Chairperson
Committee on Housing and Executive Administration
B24-0419-No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021

Dear Madam Chair and distinguished members of the Committee on Housing and Executive Administration,

My name is Joon Bang, the Chief Executive Officer of Iona Senior Services. On behalf of the Iona community, we applaud you for taking a stand against the food insecurity affecting our older adults in the District. When I joined the organization five months ago, my first client visit was at Regency House, the only public housing available for older persons in Ward 3. Of the 140+ Regency House tenants, over 40% have one or more disabilities and nearly 80% of them live alone. Unfortunately, these percentages while extremely high, are not too far from the stark realities of the compounding needs and difficult life experiences of many of our aging residents across the city.

This client visit was a part of our Food Pantry Plus delivery. It is an Iona program developed to meet the needs of our most vulnerable older adults who are unable to go out to buy food or essentials because of immobility caused by physical or cognitive impairments, income insecurity, abject poverty, or simply because of the lack of transportation access. As we made deliveries, one client welcomed us into his home. His relationship with Iona began seven years ago when he found help with his lapsed SNAP benefits and housing application. Rose, Iona's licensed community-based registered dietitian nutritionist intervened when he was identified as being food-insecure and at high nutrition risk just a few years ago.

Since then, he began receiving home delivered meals, and as I listened to their conversation during this visit, I witnessed something much more meaningful than just the act of making a food pantry delivery. I saw trust and friendship in their interaction. I learned through them that food security, while it must begin with access to nutritious meals for ALL older adults, it is also about building community with our older neighbors forged by genuine human connection and care. Over time the two had worked together for him to receive nutrition support specific to addressing deficiencies that were exacerbating his chronic diabetic leg ulcers caused by his paraplegia and other health challenges unique to him. Rose and members of the Iona team served as the link between him and the access to the resources that helped him continue to live and age in his community. His life experience is just one of the 12,000+ individual and unique experiences of our older adults living in poverty in our city, the vast majority of them unnoticed and invisible to most of us.

For this reason, we support initiatives that seeks to reduce barriers for vulnerable individuals as they age especially so if it means we are able to create equity in access to important resources to support their needs. There are two elements of the No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021 we believe can be achieved sooner than later – the Elderly Simplified Application

Project (ESAP) and the addition of Home Delivered Meals (HDMs) to the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities Waiver (EPD Waiver).

SNAP is considered the most effective tool in combating food insecurity impacting older adults in the country today. However, only 46% of the District's eligible older adult population is receiving this benefit. Research has shown that stigma, misunderstanding of eligibility, and barriers during the application/enrollment process are three key factors for underutilization of SNAP. We are in favor of the steps outlined to increase SNAP participation and highly support the adoption of the ESAP.

EPD Waiver HDMs would provide a valuable prepared meal resource for disabled adults aged 18-59. Last month, our nutrition team received a referral for a 57-year-old EPD Waiver-eligible client who was desperate to find a HDM program he qualified for. Living alone and recently released from the hospital, he suffers from multiple chronic conditions including debilitating congestive heart failure. He was unable to shop for or prepare appropriate meals for himself and could barely afford to buy food.

In addition, we respectfully ask the City Council to invite and fund community-based organizations and anchor institutions to develop outreach strategies tailored to meet the needs of our diverse and multicultural aging communities. There is no one size fits all solution to support the unique and diverse needs of vulnerable populations. We also believe that it is important to acknowledge that passage of legislation and policy change takes time. Time many of our older adults simply do not have. I began this testimony by sharing with you about my first Iona client experience. Unfortunately, that gentleman passed away just a few months ago. Ultimately, the health of any society depends on how we treat the most vulnerable among us. No older adult should go hungry in this country and certainly not in our nation's capital. Please move with urgency to support the needs of our communities. I thank you for your time and the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Joon Bang
Chief Executive Officer
Iona Senior Services

Good morning,

I support the No Senior Hungry Bill which requires DC government to:

- (1) Do enhanced outreach to increase senior participation in SNAP (food stamps). Only half of eligible seniors participate now.
- (2) Assess seniors' access to grocery stores and ability to prepare meals when deciding what services they need.
- (3) Include home-delivered meals and nutrition supplements in home health care services for seniors and disabled people with Medicaid. DC is one of only 10 states that don't include this benefit.
- (4) Coordinate agencies to come up with a Senior Food Security Plan and communications plan.

Ana M. Beltran
Ward 8 Resident

To: Chair Anita Bonds Committee on Housing and Executive Administration

From: Carol Bluestone
3702 Morrison St NW (Ward 3)
Washington, DC 20015
202-363-5078
CarolBluestone@comcast.net

I am writing in support of the No Senior Hungry Act. As a senior citizen and resident of DC for 50 years, I have watched the city grow into a vibrant international center. While the city has changed in many ways--and much has been for the good, there are chronic problems that affect residents. I am hopeful that the No Senior Hungry Act will help to address the important issue of food justice.

During the pandemic, the general public became more aware of the difficulties facing the most vulnerable in our city. We saw an outpouring of creative responses from restaurants, civic/business groups and individual neighbors and a recognition that the public response has been hindered by a lack of co-ordination among the various public agencies charged with providing assistance to our seniors. There is also the need to expand/improve efforts to inform seniors of the array of options available to them. The issue is not just of finding more dollars---but ensuring that whatever funds are available be used to maximum effectiveness.

The scarcity of supermarkets/food options in certain areas of the city is well known. For many, access to fresh healthy food options is hindered by lack of stores, proximity and transportation options. This trifecta may be hardest on seniors, particularly in poorer areas, but prevalent in all wards especially for those those with health concerns.

The time to pass the No Senior Hungry Act is now. DC residents have been sensitized to the needs of our oldest residents and this bill would undoubtedly have substantial public support. Along with adding home-delivered meals to the Medicaid waiver, we can ensure that our international city known for being a vibrant place to work is also a secure place to live and age with dignity.

Thank you in advance for the opportunity to submit testimony to be included in the record on this important legislation.

Dear DC City Council Members:

I am an epidemiologist living in Ward 3 and am writing to support the No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021. Every week, I speak with food-insecure seniors in Ward 3 as part of my volunteer work with Ward 3 Mutual Aid and Food for All DC.

This bill is sensible, calling for a special taskforce, improved agency coordination, a Senior Food Security Plan, and developing a communications plan for enhanced outreach to seniors. Only half of low-income seniors eligible for SNAP benefits currently are receiving them, so easing of barriers to access are urgently needed.

The city also needs a communications plan that is more than a one-shot effort. Having benefits information on a city website is inadequate because eligible low-income seniors may not ever see the website or may not have Internet access. A full range of public health communications are needed, including social media and targeted outreach to stores and apartments and churches. These communications need to be made periodically because the food-insecure population shifts over time.

Other key requirements of the bill are assessing individual nutrition needs and adding meal-delivery services to home healthcare services for Medicaid beneficiaries. I talk with seniors and disabled people younger than age 60 who cannot prepare their own meals, so they need meal delivery services and nutrition supplements. SNAP covers frozen entrees, but does not cover prepared hot or cold foods, so home meal-delivery services are necessary for people unable to prepare their own meals.

The bill also considers access to grocery stores. **I have one suggestion for improving the bill:** assessment of access to grocery stores also should include consideration of whether seniors are able to order grocery services online and pay for grocery delivery services. Providing access to Internet, providing instructions on how to order food online, and providing a supplement to cover the cost of delivery fees may be very helpful in getting food to low-income seniors or disabled people younger than age 60 who are unable to shop at grocery stores in person.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I am grateful to live in a city that is concerned about the wellbeing of all its residents and I thank you for proposing this bill.

Sincerely,

Elisa R. Braver, PhD

Adjunct Associate Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health, University of Maryland School of Medicine

elisabraver@gmail.com

Volunteer with Ward 3 Mutual Aid

Volunteer with Food for All DC

Dear DC City Council Members:

I live in Washington, DC in Ward **3** and am writing to support the No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021. I am concerned about the food-insecure seniors in DC. Only half of eligible low-income seniors now are receiving SNAP benefits, so urgent action is needed.

This bill is common sense. It requires the DC government to set up a taskforce to come up with a plan to improve outreach to seniors and address food insecurity. The bill also calls for meal-delivery services to be added to Medicaid home health care services, which is what 41 other states already have. This is important because some disabled people cannot prepare their own meals.

Here are a few suggestions for improving the bill.

- 1. The bill should cover both seniors and disabled people younger than age 60.**
- 2. The bill should state that the taskforce needs to develop a budget to implement its recommendations and indicate whether Department of Aging and Community Living needs additional funds to address senior food insecurity.**
- 3. The bill should clarify that assessment of nutritional needs also should include consideration of whether seniors are able to order grocery services online and pay for grocery delivery services.** Providing access to Internet, providing instructions on how to order food online, and providing a supplement to cover the cost of delivery fees may be very helpful in getting food to low-income seniors or disabled people younger than age 60 who are unable to shop at grocery stores in person.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I am pleased that DC City Council members proposed this bill.

Sincerely,
Susan Cohen
slcfilms@yahoo.com

Dear DC City Council:

Thank you very much proposing the No Senior Hungry Act, which I support. I live in Ward 3 and am concerned about the food-insecure seniors in DC. Only half of eligible low-income seniors now are receiving SNAP benefits, so urgent action is needed by our city government. As a volunteer with Ward 3 Mutual Aid and Food for All DC, I am familiar with how common food insecurity is, even in Ward 3.

This bill is common sense. It requires the DC government to set up a taskforce to come up with a plan to improve outreach to seniors and address food insecurity. The bill also calls for meal-delivery services to be added to Medicaid home health care services, which is what 41 other states already have. This is important because some disabled people cannot prepare their own meals.

Here are a few suggestions for improving the bill.

1. **The bill should cover both seniors and disabled people younger than age 60.**
2. **The bill should state that the taskforce needs to develop a budget to implement its recommendations and indicate whether Department of Aging and Community Living needs additional funds to address senior food insecurity.**
3. **The bill should clarify that assessment of nutritional needs also should include consideration of whether seniors are able to order grocery services online and pay for grocery delivery services.** Providing access to Internet, providing instructions on how to order food online, and providing a supplement to cover the cost of delivery fees may be very helpful in getting food to low-income seniors or disabled people younger than age 60 who are unable to shop at grocery stores in person.

Thank you for considering these points. Please let me know if you have any questions. I am pleased DC City Council members proposed this bill.
Sincerely - L. Austin Doyle, M.D.

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Chairperson Bonds and Councilmembers:

My name is Wanda Dudley, I live in heart of SE Ward 8. I am here today to thank you for your support of this Legislation and I would like to see that strong support remain.

As a Volunteer Lead Coordinator for United Planning Organization (UPO) an a Client Leadership Council Advocacy (CLC) for Seniors and Grocery Plus. I am indeed aware and knowledgeable of knowing the importance of Senior Hunger, insecurities and availability of food.

Through conversations with my Kings and Queens, some do not receive food stamps because a few dollars separate them for being qualify and others that do, receive an average of 25\$ to 95\$ monthly which put them in a dilemma of either buying the eggs or the chicken. **I, MYSELF**, fell victim to the insecurities of not having food, **I**, ate beans for 6 months because I didn't know where to turn and/or waiting for paper work to be process. Now, we have the unreachable, the ones we do not see or hear of until they pass away from hunger. If I asked for food right now I'm hungry right now not waiting 3 to 7 days for paper work to be process. It should be easier, more convenient and it should not be embarrassing. It should be just and it should be fair.

Our community has been plagued with High Blood Pressure, Diabetes and Heart Disease because of our food choices and food availability. Most of our Seniors eat to survive – not to be healthy- because “health” is not affordable, or it does not fit into their budget.

One of our biggest obstacles is to navigate through hunger. How do we feed ourselves: I've learned from experience of the lowest of low is where you learn the most. Being without teaches us resilient and we eat what's available to us. It makes us eating to survive.

Should this Legislation continue, **YES**: is it beneficial, **YES**; Should it be funded **YES**:

My voice cries out to you to please help us to live a healthier life. My Kings and Queens of Washington DC the heart of our country deserve access to healthy affordable food.

Thank You for your time.

Testimony for the No Senior Hungry Amendment Act

Beatrice Evans

Good morning, Councilmember Bonds. Thank you for holding a hearing for the No Senior Hungry Amendment Act. My name is Beatrice Evans, and I am representing the seniors of Triangle View Senior Building. We are located in Ward 7.

When I think about nutritional foods, I imagine fresh, appetizing, healthy fruits and vegetables like apples, melons, kale, and cabbage, not rice, cereal and canned goods. A lot of seniors in my building have diabetes and high blood pressure as well as other health issues.

I don't know how the legislation will improve the quality of nutritional foods that you serve us, but I do know that DC has a surplus of \$570 million. This surplus can be used to improve our access to healthy food with four priorities:

1. I suggest you give seniors more food stamps so they can buy their own groceries.

2. You should provide free transportation for all seniors or partner with agencies who will come to us, like Bread for the City and Hunger Solutions, Ms. Beverley Wheeler. We are in a food desert because there are only 3 full-service grocery stores for Wards 7 and 8.

3. Make sure that any organization or vendor receiving city dollars only provides quality goods.

Some service organizations are providing unripe, wilted hard vegetables and fruits. Others provide prepared cooked foods that are not tasty at all or the same menu over and over.

These organizations should follow the example of Bread for the City's food delivery program. What a variety of butter, meat and always fresh quality foods!

4. Lastly, invest more in teaching seniors how to use their EBT cards to purchase groceries by phone and have it delivered from stores like Giant, Walmart and Amazon.

If you need more examples of the lack of quality we get here in Ward 7, I would be happy to answer. But your committee and related agencies should seek regular feedback from seniors about the services you are providing and organizations you partner with. Work with the tenant associations, organizers and leaders, and people living in senior buildings to understand the reality. We rely on flyers and word of mouth to share information and have relationships with our neighbors.

I urge you and the Council to pass this Act and ensure these ideas are included. Thank you for your time.

Dear DC City Council Members:

I live in Washington, DC in Ward **3** and am writing to support the No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021. I am concerned about the food-insecure seniors in DC. Only half of eligible low-income seniors now are receiving SNAP benefits, so urgent action is needed.

This bill is common sense. It requires the DC government to set up a taskforce to come up with a plan to improve outreach to seniors and address food insecurity. The bill also calls for meal-delivery services to be added to Medicaid home health care services, which is what 41 other states already have. This is important because some disabled people cannot prepare their own meals.

Here are a few suggestions for improving the bill.

- 1. The bill should cover both seniors and disabled people younger than age 60.**
- 2. The bill should state that the taskforce needs to develop a budget to implement its recommendations and indicate whether Department of Aging and Community Living needs additional funds to address senior food insecurity.**
- 3. The bill should clarify that assessment of nutritional needs also should include consideration of whether seniors are able to order grocery services online and pay for grocery delivery services.** Providing access to Internet, providing instructions on how to order food online, and providing a supplement to cover the cost of delivery fees may be very helpful in getting food to low-income seniors or disabled people younger than age 60 who are unable to shop at grocery stores in person.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I am pleased that DC City Council members proposed this bill.

Sincerely,
JULIA FARBER
4707 Connecticut Ave NW

Dear Housing Committee,

I was trolling around the net looking for public-private partnerships for housing assistance and found none but I did discover DC Greens and on there this link about the "No Senior Hungry" proposed legislation.

I am a longtime DC resident, 21 years in my below-market apartment here in Ward 6, am retired since fall 2015 and just shy of 25 *months* till Social Security. I have been since retirement living on limited and dwindling retirement savings that will almost but not quite last until I get Social Security.

Since July 2018 I have been on SNAP through DC Department of Human Services/Economic Security Administration. When it works, and DC DHS/ESA does not screw up the recertification by turning off my benefits for no reason with no justification or notice, it is fine. When it does not, as it has not been since July 2021 when they for no reason and with no notice let alone justification, turned my SNAP benefits off it is a disaster.

SNAP is an entitlement and for us extremely-low-income seniors it is a necessity. When it goes away we are in trouble.

I am now having to spend rent money on food and both I and my landlord are suffering because of this ongoing malfeasance and mismanagement at DC DHS/ESA. They need to be totally reformed starting with Council getting rid of the Director. That will be the first step to No Seniors Hungry.

The next step is to have 12-month recertification period, to have effective and constant oversight of the program, to make sure that DC DHS/ESA never cuts off our benefits due to a recertification issue or delay (such is called "procedural denial" and it is a waste of our money, of staff time, and is against the regulations of DC DHS/ESA and also the USDA Food and Nutrition Service but DC DHS/ESA has been doing it for years).

The step after that is to get all low-income seniors onto that program. The so-called SNAP GAP is huge in DC I am sure because the effort of applying and reapplying for this program is not worth the trouble (unless you are really desperate and having 24-7-365 WiFi access at home and can contact DHS/ESA and your DACL Authorized Representative who is to make all updates and changes to your information on your behalf).

A system where DC DHS/ESA retains records for the required three years even after cases are closed, where DC DHS/ESA does not do like DC DOES has been recently sued for, which is to say that they no longer ask for conflicting information, no longer give conflicting and unnecessary demands for recertification you have already submitted, that DC DHS/ESA follows its Policy Manual to the letter, will be a system where No Senior goes Hungry in the District. Right now you do not have that system and people like me are getting badly hurt.

I worked for 29 1/2 years, expected that when I retired I would get the kind of support I need, but this has not happened. Between people who say "Don't worry; we'll prevent you from homelessness" and do not follow up yearly with rent assistance, to organizations like DC Hunger that do not follow through on promises to help with DC DHS/ESA and right up to government agency DC DHS/ESA, I find myself having to babysit bureaucrats and am having my tenancy and my life really threatened by not having

enough money to buy food because my food stamps have been cut off for no reason and with no justification and no end in sight.

The legislation for No Senior Hungry must address the systemic ongoing and immoral inhumane treatment we get from DC Department of Human Services/Economic Security Administration or else do not waste the ink printing it.

Thank you for your advocacy because the need is great.

God cares for the poor and it is time DC did as well.

Yvonne Farrell
Ward 6, White by the way and Impoverished

<https://www.dcgreens.org/noseniorhungry>

Dear D.C.Council:

Please please exercise compassion for the elderly, often living alone, residents of our community and city! It's the humane and responsible outreach that we expect of govt.; and any of us -- due to illness, family circumstances, economic loss -- might need a helping hand from our govt. at some time, no matter how good life is for some of us currently. It's heartbreaking to leave seniors in dire straights over food, housing, health deficiencies, but making sure everyone in this rich city has adequate nourishment is easier than building homes or curing illness -- and costs much less. We wouldn't allow our pets to go hungry because they can't get food by themselves, so please don't forget that many seniors are also unable to fend for themselves. They are not a burden; they are parents, grandparents, siblings -- our family!

Sincerely,

S.K. Gerard
Woodley Rd

NO SENIOR HUNGRY TESTIMONY BEFORE DC CITY COUNCIL

February 14, 2022

Greetings,

I am Andra Powell Henderson, a 75-year-old native Washingtonian, residing in Far SW, in Ward 8. I am also a proud member of the Client Leadership Council of the Capital Area Food Bank.

I moved into my current home 39 years ago, in 1982 as a renter; three years later, I became a homeowner. I come from humble beginnings yet I managed to care for myself and 3 daughters, after a divorce, while falling into the “working poor” category, even with child support, and having three degrees!

Though I had a long and interesting career, spanning nearly 50 years, I failed to properly prepare for retirement. I worked for the federal government, private industry and four agencies of DC government. With all that I gave to my DC government jobs, and being a DC taxpayer, I've often wondered why DC isn't working for me since I am unable to do so.

After a diagnosis of breast cancer in 2003, I began receiving Social Security Disability payments; converted to Social Security Retirement in 2011.

Since then, my payments have increased only \$277 per month, including the recent 5.9 percent cost of living adjustment! There is little money to buy healthy groceries.

It is reported that 25% of Seniors 65 and older, residing in Ward 8 live in poverty. I escaped the poverty level by less than \$183 per month!

It has been years since I last applied for food stamps. I was offered \$11 a month. I did not accept them. Not worth the bother and horror of the application process. Many seniors in my community experience myriad medical issues such as myself, and many of us lack private transportation. We should not have to stand in lines waiting for social services offices to open or at churches or other facilities to obtain needed food. Why should we? No dignity there. If we manage to get to the grocery store, we must use the services of the folks hanging around outside the store, and pay them. It's not the most ideal but more affordable than a cab or shared ride such as Uber. If we can drive to the store, we usually drive to MD and/or VA, taking tax dollars to them. A friend delivers Capital Area Food Bank food boxes to me. I appreciate them, but they only supplement.

Since 1982, when I moved into my house 39 years ago, there have been 6 Mayors, 8 City Council Chairs, 21 City Council Members at-large, and 7 Ward 8 Representatives to the City Council, yet I have seen very few changes for the better for Ward 8 residents.

Today, in 2022, there is much to do, starting with assuring that seniors in Ward 8 have access to healthy and affordable food choices on a regular basis. Therefore, I strongly support the proposed legislation of the No Senior Hungry Omnibus.



**HUMANE
RESCUE
ALLIANCE**
Animals. People. Community.

February 18, 2022

Committee on Housing and Executive Administration
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20004

RE: Humane Rescue Alliance Support for B24-0419 - No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021

Dear Chair Bonds and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The Humane Rescue Alliance (HRA) honors more than 150 years of commitment to protecting animals, supporting families, and advocating for positive change to create a world where all animals can thrive.

Through HRA's community services like our seven regular monthly pet pantries, we have seen firsthand the struggles of our senior population, and many of our clients who need assistance in providing for their pets also struggle with issues of food insecurity.

Seniors have higher rates of food insecurity due to fixed incomes, heightened barriers to accessing food, and increased rates of social isolation, among other factors. Last year, HRA and the DC Department of Aging and Community Living (DACL) teamed up to launch the Senior Pet Connect, a program that aims to combat senior isolation through in-person and virtual events. Compared to people who don't own pets, seniors with pets are 36 percent less likely to report loneliness. Further, studies have shown that spending just 15 minutes with a pet can have positive emotional benefits and reduce feelings of loneliness.

The Senior Pet Connect makes HRA a go-to resource for seniors and their animal needs and aims to combat senior isolation by providing meaningful connections between seniors and animals to support their emotional well-being. By collaborating with human social service organizations like DACL, we can build holistic support services for vulnerable populations and for animals as well.

An integrated and coordinated approach is needed to combat all the issues that our seniors face. We support the No Senior Hunger Omnibus Amendment Act to create an interagency task force to develop a City-wide response to senior food insecurity that coordinates between agencies and maximizes the effectiveness and reach of services. The legislation also requires the development of a comprehensive communication plan for senior nutrition services to ensure that we are using all available resources to connect with isolated seniors. HRA looks forward to continuing partnerships with organizations working to help seniors and being a part of any efforts to connect with isolated seniors in our community.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation and we respectfully urge the committee to pass this legislative package and address the critical issue of senior hunger in the District.

Emily Hovermale
Director of Government Affairs
ehovermale@humanerescuealliance.org

Public Hearing on the No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021
Committee on Housing & Executive Administration
Chair, Anita Bonds
Monday, February 14, 2022

Good morning, Councilmember Bonds, Committee members, and Council staff. I am Winnie Huston, Food Policy Strategist, for DC Greens, a District non-profit that works to promote health equity by building a just and resilient food system. I am here today to speak in support of the No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021.

Senior food insecurity is a persistent and growing problem that is negatively impacting the health, quality of life, and independence of DC seniors. The latest data shows that DC has the highest senior food insecurity rate among US states at 13.5%, an increase from 9.6% in 2016. Although we don't have a complete picture of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on senior food insecurity, we do know that seniors are using nutrition services at a higher rate than before the pandemic. Research shows that the number of DC seniors facing food insecurity will grow in the coming decade, as the senior population is expected to increase by over 20,000 by 2030. **We must work as a unified City - government, private sector, and community members to put our arms around this situation and build systems to address this crisis facing too many seniors.**

In early 2021, Councilmember Cheh convened a working group of Council and government agency staff, community leaders, public health officials, and nutrition providers to better understand the successes, challenges, and barriers to combating senior food insecurity. Those discussions informed the creation of the No Senior Hungry bill before this Committee.

During this time, we learned that there is:

- no agency with the responsibility to address senior food insecurity - no one's in charge;
- little or no coordination between agencies providing nutrition services;
- limited or no outreach about available nutrition services;
- no data on how many seniors in each community/Ward are food insecure, how many of those seniors are accessing services, or if the services are meeting the needs of seniors;
- no plan to reach seniors who are not already connected to services; and
- no comprehensive strategy to increase senior participation in programs like SNAP, adult day care services, or Medicaid funded home-delivered meals and nutrition services.

Based on conversations with seniors and community leaders, I offer the following recommendations: We must:

- implement strategies to provide nutrition services to the LGBTQ community, residents who are not fluent in English, including our deaf and hearing impaired neighbors, and seniors who have religious and dietary needs not served by traditional nutrition programs;
- partner with our faith community and other trusted neighborhood leaders to develop programs and services to reach seniors in all neighborhoods;
- develop, improve, and publicize transportation services for seniors;
- increase SNAP benefits for seniors;
- simplify the process for eligible seniors to receive public nutrition benefits; and
- solicit input from seniors on how best to improve services.

Madam Chair, I will end my testimony by asking you and the members of this Committee to listen to the witnesses who are sharing their stories and think about how you would handle the situation if you or your loved ones were food insecure. Let's work together as one City - government and private sector - to say, **No More Hungry Seniors in the District of Columbia**. Pass the No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021.

Thank you.

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COMMITTEE ON HOUSING & EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATION
NO SENIOR HUNGRY OMNIBUS AMENDMENT ACT HEARING
14 FEBRUARY 2022
TESTIMONY OF MELISSA JENSEN
ANTI-HUNGER PROGRAM & POLICY ANALYST, D.C. HUNGER SOLUTIONS

Good afternoon. Thank you, Chairperson Bonds and the committee for convening this hearing and the opportunity to testify on the No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act. My name is Melissa Jensen, and I am an Anti-Hunger Program and Policy Analyst at D.C. Hunger Solutions, a local initiative of the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). D.C. Hunger Solutions works to create a hunger-free community and improve the health, nutrition, well-being, and economic security of low-income residents of the nation's capital. My work focuses specifically on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and older adult hunger in the District of Columbia.

D.C. is #1 in the nation for older adult (age 60+) food insecurity¹; FRAC estimates that 15% of D.C.'s nearly 120,000 older adults are currently food insecure and 4.8% experience very low food security.² That means over 24,000 D.C. older adults are experiencing anxiety about affording enough food, with many having to reduce food consumption or quality as a result. 17% of D.C. older adults live in poverty.³ Cost of living, including food, housing, and healthcare, keeps rising in the District, while most older adults continue to live on fixed incomes. 4,290 grandparents in D.C. are householders responsible for their grandchildren who live with them.⁴ Older adults in Wards 7 and 8 currently only have four grocery stores between them.⁵ It may soon become utterly unsustainable to live as an older adult in D.C., a World Health Organization Age-Friendly City.

¹ <https://www.feedingamerica.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/2020-The%20State%20of%20Senior%20Hunger%20in%202018.pdf>

² Food Research & Action Center. https://frac.org/maps/seniors/tables/sr_food_insec_2018_2020.html

³ <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/16000US1150000-washington-dc/>.

⁴ Grandfacts: District of Columbia. Found at <https://www.grandfamilies.org/Portals/0/State%20Fact%20Sheets/Grandfamilies-Fact-Sheet-District-of-Columbia.pdf>. May 2017.

⁵ D.C. Hunger Solutions. Closing the Grocery Store Gap in the Nation's Capital. <https://live-dchunger.pantheonsite.io/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/dchs-closing-grocery-store-gap-report.pdf>.

COVID-19 compounded this crisis of food insecurity since March 2020. We know that older adults, especially those with pre-existing conditions and poor health, are the most at risk for the novel coronavirus. Food insecurity has profound effects on one's health. For older adults in particular, the lack of adequate food is associated with poor dietary intake, poor/fair health status, diabetes, hypertension, anemia, functional limitations, depression, gum disease, and other poor health outcomes.⁶ In addition, the economic restraints that come with food insecurity may cause older adults to skip meals or cut back on vital medications.⁷ The physical and financial impacts of food insecurity make our older adult population even more vulnerable to the pandemic. While older adults have not made up the majority of infections in the District, they have made up the majority of deaths⁸. Our high rates of older adult food insecurity are certainly playing into these deaths.

To be clear, we are not saying that older adults are not being served. We know that it is not an issue of a lack of programs or resources; many older adult food and nutrition programs currently exist. There are currently 14 food programs in the District aimed at older adults. The Department of Aging and Community Living (DACL) also provides nutrition services, including community dining sites, home delivered meals, and nutrition counseling and education, serving about 65,000 older adults a month. However, senior hunger persists and is getting worse. DACL, and other D.C. government agencies, do not currently have the power or resources to work on solving the root causes of this crisis. There also exists little or no coordination between agencies to ensure that older adults have access to all programs for which they qualify.

With this context, Councilmember Cheh hosted six working groups in the first half of 2021 attended by government agencies, Council offices, community-based organizations (including D.C. Hunger Solutions), community leaders, and older adults. The information gathered from these working groups informed the content of the No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act.

⁶ Food Research & Action Center. Food insecurity is Often Invisible infographic. <http://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/infographic-food-insecurity-often-invisible-health-care-providers-role.pdf>.

⁷ Food Research & Action Center. Senior Hunger Facts Infographic. <http://frac.org/research/resource-library/senior-hunger-facts-infographic>.

⁸ <https://coronavirus.dc.gov/data>

D.C. Hunger Solutions supports this legislation for multiple reasons, my testimony will focus on three of them.

- Firstly, the Act gives DACL the authority it needs to aggressively pursue ending senior hunger. Right now, there is no government leader in the District to lead the campaign against senior hunger, although ending senior hunger is a priority of DACL and the Food Policy Council. While DACL may seem like the natural leader in these efforts, the Act officially empowers them to take this role. The Act would require DACL to lead a Senior Food Insecurity Taskforce. This Taskforce would also include the Department of Human Services (DHS), Department of Healthcare Finance (DHCF), D.C. Health, Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), and the Office of Planning (OP); four representatives from organizations serving seniors (including a nutritionist); and two District seniors currently receiving or participating in nutrition services. The Act also requires the Taskforce to prepare a Food Security Plan to improve District's response to food insecurity, which DACL will be charged with implementation. Finally, it requires DACL to create and implement a communications plan to help connect seniors to all programs for which they may qualify. While this will be a large task for DACL, we believe they are best situated to lead these efforts. The Act will give them the authority to lead, as well as pave the way for additional needed resources.
- Secondly, the Act mandates expanding SNAP access in meaningful ways. SNAP is a lifeline for many low-income D.C. residents, and studies show that older adults who use SNAP experience improved food security, improved health, better nutrition, and better medication adherence.⁹ Despite these major benefits, only 46% of eligible adults over the age of 60 participated in SNAP in the District.¹⁰ One of the main reasons that eligible older adults decide not to participate, even when they know they are eligible, is because the application process is long and complicated. The application itself usually takes at least an hour to complete, especially with the recent changes made by the Department of Healthcare Finance, and requires internet access and advanced computer literacy to do online. While there is a paper option, it is over 60 pages long and can be difficult to obtain and submit due to Covid-19. The application also requires numerous verification documents, some which people do not have anymore, to verify information that the DHS often

⁹ Food Research & Action Center. Hunger is a Health Issue for Older Adults: Food Security, Health, and the Federal Nutrition Programs. December 2019. <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/hunger-is-a-health-issue-for-older-adults-1.pdf>

¹⁰ Food Research & Action Center. SNAP Matters for Seniors. https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/senior_facts_DC.pdf

already has access to, such as social security income, disability income, and citizenship status. When older adults do manage to clear these administrative hurdles, they often receive the minimum benefit amount of \$30. One way to increase this benefit amount is to submit medical costs, but this process is timely and confusing for many.

To increase SNAP participation among older adults, the Act would require DHS to adopt the Elderly Senior Application Project (ESAP), a USDA project that seeks to increase participation among elderly low-income population by streamlining the SNAP application and recertification process, by waiving the recertification interview requirement, using data matches to reduce the amount of client-provided verification, and extending the certification period to 36 months. It would also require DHS to create a standard medical deduction (SMD) to simplify the collection of medical expense information for senior SNAP clients. This will make it easier for senior clients to increase their benefit amounts. Other strategies to make SNAP enrollment easier for seniors are also included, including streamlining submission process for rent, utilities, and other costs; and implement senior-targeted outreach for online SNAP.

- Finally, the Act was created with community input and supported by D.C. older adults. The working groups included older adults affected by food insecurity, as well as organizations who serve them. Older adults know this is a monumental issue in D.C. and are looking for solutions that work, rather than a confusing web of services to navigate. While we have heard feedback about possible improvements to the legislation, every older adult we have spoken to is relieved that the District is finally acting on this issue.

D.C. Hunger Solutions believes that this legislation is a great start to ensuring that older adults in the District of Columbia receive the nutrition services they deserve. We ask that the Committee to work to move this legislation along for passage, funding, and implementation.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Melissa Jensen

Good morning Chairman Bonds and members of the Committee. I am Rebecca Kahn, a registered dietitian, and the Director of Nutrition Services at Food & Friends. I would like to thank Councilmember Anita Bonds and the Committee on Housing and Executive Administration for holding this important hearing. The mission of Food & Friends is to provide medically tailored meals to improve the lives and health of DC residents living with serious illnesses such as diabetes, cancer, kidney failure, HIV/AIDS and other conditions that limit their ability to provide their own nourishment. Thirty percent of those we care for are seniors. The No Senior Hungry legislation will provide life-saving benefits to those members of the community and has the full support of Food & Friends.

The establishment of an Interagency Senior Food Insecurity Task Force will achieve the following:

- ensure regular communication among service providers;
- provide coordinated nutrition care for seniors;
- rescue seniors from falling through the cracks, and
- serve more seniors with customized programs that are the best fit for them.

We support expanding services in the Elderly and Persons with Physical Disabilities (EDP) Waiver to include Home-delivered meals, nutrition supplements and Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT); DC is currently one of only 10 states that has not done so. This expansion will allow seniors and people with disabilities to thrive and have improved quality of life by remaining in their homes to receive the care they need, including nutritious food, supplements if needed and MNT. Seniors will benefit from regular counseling and MNT, which includes detailed explanations of how their illness(es) and/or medications will be impacted by the food they eat.

As we age, or we are diagnosed with new illnesses such as diabetes or kidney disease, or start a new medication, our food needs necessarily change. DC seniors and people with disabilities should be allowed to access nutritious food AND understand how best to prepare or eat food given specific health conditions and medications. This legislation and specifically expanding the EDP Waiver to include Home-delivered meals, nutrition supplements and Medical Nutrition Therapy would allow DC residents to remain in the comfort of their own homes while accessing the food and information they need to remain as healthy and happy as possible.

To illustrate the importance of home-delivered meals and medical nutrition therapy, I would like to tell you a story about a recent conversation I had with a Food & Friends family. An adult child, taking care of a senior parent told me that their parent was hospitalized before receiving Food & Friends meals, then went into a rehab facility where she declined food and stopped eating completely. The medical team told the family to prepare for the worst and to take their loved one home to be comfortable and not to expect much food intake. The medical team at the rehab facility referred the family to Food & Friends, and since receiving home-delivered meals and nutrition counseling, our client has started eating again, enjoying food and has spent more quality time with family members. This intervention undoubtedly brought nourishment to body and spirit for both the client and her family, improving quality of life and providing peace of mind.

As a registered dietitian and Nutrition Services Director serving seniors and their families in DC, I see every day the direct benefits that seniors in DC will gain from this No Senior Hungry Legislation. On behalf of Food & Friends, we urge the Council to pass this vital legislation. Thank you.

Dear DC City Council Members:

I live in Washington, DC in Ward _ and am writing to support the No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021. I am concerned about the food-insecure seniors in DC. Only half of eligible low-income seniors now are receiving SNAP benefits, so urgent action is needed.

This bill is common sense. It requires the DC government to set up a taskforce to come up with a plan to improve outreach to seniors and address food insecurity. The bill also calls for meal-delivery services to be added to Medicaid home health care services, which is what 41 other states already have. This is important because some disabled people cannot prepare their own meals.

Here are a few suggestions for improving the bill.

1. **The bill should cover both seniors and disabled people younger than age 60.**
2. **The bill should state that the taskforce needs to develop a budget to implement its recommendations and indicate whether Department of Aging and Community Living needs additional funds to address senior food insecurity.**
3. **The bill should clarify that assessment of nutritional needs also should include consideration of whether seniors are able to order grocery services online and pay for grocery delivery services.** Providing access to Internet, providing instructions on how to order food online, and providing a supplement to cover the cost of delivery fees may be very helpful in getting food to low-income seniors or disabled people younger than age 60 who are unable to shop at grocery stores in person.

Sincerely,
Sharon Kaplan

Best, 🌟
Sharon

*“Because no matter how small an act of kindness or generosity or simple positivity you put out into the world, **it will make a difference.**”*

—Wonder Woman

From:
Joanna Kendig
1839 Bay St SE, Washington, DC 20003

To:
Committee on Housing and Executive Administration
Wilson Building, 1350 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Suite 116, Washington, DC 20004

Attn: Committee Chair, Councilmember Anita Bonds

Re: B24-9419 No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021

February 15, 2022

Dear Ms. Bonds,

I am writing in support of this excellent and much needed bill. Thank you for holding the hearings on this bill. And thanks to Mary Cheh and council members, for introducing and now considering this bill.

I am resident of Hill East neighborhood currently in Ward 6, being relabeled Ward 7 in near future. I am comfortably aging in my row house, able to afford my meals. I am living manageable walking, or Metro ride, distance from several shopping options. But thru my reading, and thru my involvement in local seniors' organization I am aware that not all my neighbors are as fortunate. Many, too many, of my neighbors experience hunger. I am also aware that there are many organizations and programs striving to deliver help to my fellow citizens.

In my opinion No Senior Hungry bill is the right tool to address issues of senior hunger in the District. Interagency Task Force will help coordinate activities of all of these agencies and nongovernmental organizations serving seniors. District-wide communications plan mandated in the bill will ensure we reach all seniors in need of support.

I ask you, council members, to quickly make this legislation law. No senior should go hungry.

Regards, *Joanna Kendig*

Copy to:
Charles Allen
Capitol Hill Village

**Testimony on B24-0419
No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act 2021
Before the District of Columbia City Council
Committee on Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization
Chairperson Anita Bonds**

February 14, 2020

I am George Kerr, III, Founder/CEO G III Associates, and a US Navy Veteran. I also serve on the LGBTQ Budget Coalition.

Thank you for allowing me to testify as an advocate for approximately 10.8% or more of District residents who may identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ) who are receiving long-and short-term services and support in their homes, in nursing homes, in assisted living residences, and community residential facilities. Housing plays a crucial role in the health and wellness of all community members, including our seniors in the DC LGBTQ community. I am supporting this very important legislation with a few recommendations.

In a recent report by Emerson Hunger Fellow of the DC Office of planning. Opportunities to Strengthen Nutrition Programs in DC to Address Senior Food Insecurity. The report found that discrimination, bullying, and inadequate cultural competency can also make programs unwelcoming to some seniors, especially those in the LGBTQ+ community. Including seniors in the program, development can help identify and prevent accessibility issues. The legislation should add marketing and outreach to the LGBTQ seniors.

I am also asking that the Mayor's Office of LGBTQ+ or their designate be a part of the task force.

As a gay man thriving with HIV for 23 years, I have another concern with older people living with HIV.

- It is estimated that in 2017, nearly 50% of individuals living with HIV in the US were age 50 or older.**
- LGBTQ seniors face stigma and discrimination in their daily lives, which: (1) decreases their access to services for the aging; (2) reinforces social isolation; and (3) reduces equal access to senior housing.**

The community recognized the passage of Bill 23-37. Care for LGBTQ Seniors and Seniors with HIV Care Amendment Act of 2019. Bill 24-0419 should work with this legislation.

We look forward to working closely with the agency and Director Newland in addressing these concerns.

Thank you for your consideration. I am available to answer questions you may have about my testimony.

Respectfully,

George S. Kerr, III
Chair, Policy, Advocacy, & Outreach
Mary's House for Older Adults, Inc.
gkerr@maryshousedc.org
(202) 468-9135

Dear DC City Council Members:

I live in Washington, DC in Ward 2 and am writing to support the No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021. I am concerned about the food-insecure seniors in DC. Only half of eligible low-income seniors now are receiving SNAP benefits, so urgent action is needed.

This bill is common sense. It requires the DC government to set up a taskforce to come up with a plan to improve outreach to seniors and address food insecurity. The bill also calls for meal-delivery services to be added to Medicaid home health care services, which is what 41 other states already have. This is important because some disabled people cannot prepare their own meals.

Here are a few suggestions for improving the bill.

1. **The bill should cover both seniors and disabled people younger than age 60.**
2. **The bill should state that the taskforce needs to develop a budget to implement its recommendations and indicate whether Department of Aging and Community Living needs additional funds to address senior food insecurity.**
3. **The bill should clarify that assessment of nutritional needs also should include consideration of whether seniors are able to order grocery services online and pay for grocery delivery services.** Providing access to Internet, providing instructions on how to order food online, and providing a supplement to cover the cost of delivery fees may be very helpful in getting food to low-income seniors or disabled people younger than age 60 who are unable to shop at grocery stores in person.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I am pleased that DC City Council members proposed this bill.

Jooeun Kim

Jooeun9@gmail.com

Sent from my iPhone

Please add my voice even if not on the actual ballot.
Thank you.

Anjali Kumar

anjalikumar16@gmail.com

202 403 9702

Testimony for the No Senior Hungry Amendment Act, February 14, 2022

Carmelita Lacey, Carmelita.lacey2018@gmail.com

Good morning. I'd like to thank Councilmembers Anita Bonds and Mary Cheh for hosting a hearing on the No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act.

My name is Carmelita Lacey, and I am a native Washingtonian living in Ward 7.

Passing of this legislation and the creation of the Senior Food Insecurity Task Force will create a clear process for seniors to follow and amplify the voices of seniors with regard to food insecurity. I care about senior food insecurity because there is a direct link between good health and good nutrition. Ward 7 has one of the highest poverty rates in the city, and there is a serious lack of access to quality food. Grocery stores and open-air markets are almost nonexistent. The issue of food deserts needs to be addressed. I care about this issue because this is my home and because we, DC seniors, deserve easier, more accessible, comprehensive quality nutrition.

As a native Washingtonian, I was shocked to hear that DC has the highest percentage of senior food insecurity in the nation since there are so many food resources in this city. This legislation would centralize access to food, programs, and services, and it is critical to create a central, primary place for seniors to connect with those programs and services. It just makes sense. Additionally, having the Department of Aging and Community Living (DACL) in charge of the oversight of the program is exactly what needs to happen so that our community feels supported. Most seniors are aware of this agency, and whenever there is a concern around these issues, DACL is who they call.

Collaboration and coordination are needed to make this effort successful. It should not take years to see these important changes become a reality. I appreciate the educational components proposed in the legislation and the involvement of district seniors who have the relevant experience to contribute, including Ms. Beatrice Evans. She is a DC senior footsoldier who, in her testimony at the hearing, spoke to her invaluable knowledge of immediate senior food security needs. Furthermore, as a senior with visual impairments, I would be happy to contribute in any capacity to the task force and believe my experiences would be useful to you all. I hope that you keep our input and concerns at the forefront as this legislation moves forward.

Thank you to the entire Council for your attention. This legislation has my full support, and the Council should make it law.

PREPARED TESTIMONY
BY LUCIE LEBLOIS AND ALYSA MACCLELLAN
DC FOOD PROJECT CO-FOUNDERS

TO: COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATION

RE: B24-0419, the No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021

Monday, February 14, 2022

My name is Lucie Leblois. My name is Alysa MacClellan. We are the DC Food Project co-founders and moms to children in DC Public Schools. We would like to first thank Committee Chair Anita Bonds for convening this hearing and considering this bill. Thank you also to Councilmembers Cheh, Anita Bonds, Vincent Gray, Janeese Lewis George, Charles Allen, Christina Henderson, Brooke Pinto and Trayon White, Sr. for introducing this legislation.

We, DC Food Project, are here today to offer our full support for the No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021.

Our organization's mission is to tackle food insecurity specifically amongst school children – but what the pandemic quickly brought to light is the crisis seniors in this city are also facing.

It does not surprise us to hear that the District has the highest senior food insecurity rate amongst the United States - we have been seeing it first-hand over the past two years.

When the pandemic hit and schools shut down, our team quickly pivoted all of our programs and launched an Emergency Weekend Bag Program, distributing well over 2 million meals over the past two years – what we did not anticipate were the seniors, who week after week, have come to line up and ask for help. So we did. And continue to do.

What have we seen and what have we learned?

- **There are Significant Gaps** - While a myriad of programs are in place throughout the city, there equally are major gaps. Wards 1, 4 and 5 are examples of this and where our organization, DC Food Project, in partnership with DC Central Kitchen have done much of our work. Many seniors have told us that we were the only ones coming to help them – that their communities have felt forgotten.
- **Lack of Access** - For many seniors, the ability to leave their homes or find adequate transportation is simply not an option. More often than not, we provide multiple bags of food to seniors who in turn take them to neighbors or relatives stuck at home.
- **Lack of Information** - Ultimately, for many seniors, they simply have not known where to get help and how to get help. Many have told us they are not aware of programs the

PREPARED TESTIMONY
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RE: B24-0419, the No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021

Monday, February 14, 2022

District has available to them, they do not know how to access them, they do not know how to apply.

We are here today to not only implore you to pass this Bill but to consider the following:

- 1) As you consider creating an Interagency Senior Food Insecurity Taskforce, we strongly suggest you include organizations who are on the ground, who can keep a pulse on how programs are working, identify what is missing and where the gaps are - this will be a crucial element in the overall approach as this group advises the Mayor and prepares the Senior Food Security Plan.
- 2) Community is key: Do not underestimate the power of a neighborhood. For many seniors, their community is where they feel safe, where they get their information, how they provide for one another – it is their hub, it is where they are and is where the District ought to focus much of their efforts. For example:
 - a) Consider food distributions at neighborhood levels. Lean on organizations who are already there; centers that already exist.
 - b) Consider communicating through neighborhood channels - the ANCs, the neighborhood listservs, street signage, fliers - it works!
 - c) And – learn about the needs of each neighborhood - the language(s) spoken; the food needed - one of many lessons we have learned along the way is to ensure that the process of getting food to those in need remains dignified.
- 3) Lean on local partners: As aforementioned, it will be of utmost importance for the Mayor and the Council to lean on and partner with on-the-ground organizations, nonprofits and local government officials. They - we - are the eyes and ears of our communities and can advise, support and ensure our seniors' needs are met.

We applaud the Council for being champions of this issue and for authoring this legislation and to this Committee for its consideration of this Bill.

Thank you on behalf of DC Food Project



DUPONT CIRCLE VILLAGE
SHATTERING THE STEREOTYPE
ADAMS MORGAN • DUPONT CIRCLE • KALORAMA

**Testimony of Eva M. Lucero
Executive Director, Dupont Circle Village
The Committee on Housing & Executive Administration
February 14, 2022**

Re: B24-0419 – No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021

Good morning, Chairman Bonds and members and staff of the committee. My name is Eva M. Lucero. I am the executive director of Dupont Circle Village, a community-based service organization in partnership with older adults in the neighborhoods of Adams Morgan, Dupont Circle and Kalorama in Wards 1 and 2. I am also a 30-year Washington resident and live in Ward 3. I am here to testify in support of the ***No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act*** not only as the director of an organization that serves older adults, but as a concerned citizen.

At a council hearing last year, I first learned that D.C. has the highest percentage of senior hunger in the nation. I was totally taken aback by this astounding and disappointing ranking. With so many programs in our city that address food insecurity, how is it that Washington DC leads the nation in senior hunger? I have since learned that food insecurity for our older adult community is not because of a lack of food and nutrition programs or resources. The issue is a *disconnect* between the programs and their ability to reach the people who need them the most. Some of the barriers to reaching our aging neighbors with healthy meals include limited or lack of transportation

and mobility, poverty, physical injuries and illnesses, access to technology, and the complexity of the application process. It's important to recognize that the seniors most impacted in our city continue to be residents of color.

Reaching local seniors is a complex challenge; however, I strongly believe the action items outlined in the Amendment is a critical step to help resolve this issue. We cannot wait. Addressing senior food insecurity is an urgent issue and we must act now. I call on Mayor Bowser and this committee to prioritize actions detailed in the Amendment to address senior hunger in the FY23 D.C. budget. For D.C. to truly be an Age-Friendly City, our older residents must not feel anxious about when they will have their next meal.

Dupont Circle Village is doing a small part with our Meal Maven program and we have designated funding sources that address food insecurity among some Village members. If this amendment passes, the Village network would be a tremendous partner to assist with the proposed comprehensive communications plan on this issue and ways the city will improve delivery of services to those in our aging community who need it most.

In closing, thank you for hosting this important public hearing, Chairman Bonds. Special thanks to Councilmember Cheh who introduced the ***Amendment*** and I am also grateful to Councilmembers Vince Gray, Janeese Lewis George, Charles Allen, Christina Henderson, Brooke Pinto, and Trayon White who signed on as co-introducers and all are willing to address this critical issue head on.



DC Central Kitchen Testimony
No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act Hearing
February 14, 2022

Honorable Chairperson Bonds and Members of Council,

Thank you for convening today's vitally important hearing on the No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act. My name is Alexander Moore and I am testifying on behalf of **DC Central Kitchen**. Like many of the organizations represented here today, DC Central Kitchen has decades of experience addressing hunger and poor health in our city. We have also been a first-hand witness to the staggering shifts in food insecurity in our community during pandemic. And like many of you, we are tired. We are tired of the seemingly endless food emergency facing too many District residents and we are tired of seeing DC consistently sit atop the nation in our rates of senior hunger.

During the pandemic, DC Central Kitchen's community-based nutrition services expanded by 87% over 2019 levels. **Nearly half of this increased demand for services was from older adults in our city.** In addition to our typical approach of providing healthy meals to partner nonprofits and local agencies, we received feedback from residents, primarily senior citizens and immigrant households, that fresh and nutritious groceries were of particular need. We responded by creating a grocery assembly program so large that it needed to move into the Washington Convention Center. Our fast-growing Healthy Corners program, supported by DC Health and the USDA, ensures that fresh and frozen produce is on the shelves of corner stores in neighborhoods where seniors cannot easily access supermarkets and that SNAP customers can expand their purchasing power when selecting our fruit and vegetable offerings.

The efforts of my front-line DC Central Kitchen colleagues in bringing millions of meals, grocery bags, and Healthy Corners products to our city's older adults are just one small piece of a much larger ecosystem. We applaud the efforts of our partners at the Department of Aging and Community Living (DACL) and its lead agencies to meet the needs of thousands of seniors, the role of public nutrition programs like SNAP, and the dozens of nonprofits and mutual aid networks that have stretched far beyond what anyone could have reasonably expected of them in March 2020.

From the outset of the pandemic, this city relied on its rich network of food-focused organizations and experts – and in doing so averted a major disaster. On a near-daily basis, public agencies, private nonprofits, and local advocates coordinated their efforts, identified areas of need, and shared resources. This level of transparency and trust was a credit to the Council and the Mayor's years-long investments in local food policy leadership and **absent these interagency and inter-sectoral collaborations, the District's food security crisis would have been far, far worse.**

Senior hunger is often referred to as a 'hidden' form of hunger. We support the No Senior Hungry bill because it brings the transparency and visibility we need to effect significant change and build on what we have proven to work during the pandemic. The Act's call for an Interagency Senior Food Security Task Force prevents a backsliding to pre-pandemic silos and responds directly to the cracks between services that disproportionately affect our older residents. There may be opportunities to further enhance the bill by considering how other senior-serving programs, such as DOES's Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), could be engaging in capturing and disseminating relevant

information. The Act's focus on age- and culturally appropriate communication and outreach is critical to putting our existing resources to good use while overcoming the stigmas and technology barriers we know keep seniors from getting the help they need. The Act also works to creatively leverage available Federal resources while creating space for local organizations and older residents to have a say in solutions that will work in our unique context. Finally, the Act's call for an annual progress report will create a shared understanding of the real issues at hand and ensure everyone involved in this work is accountable for their contributions.

We need to act on this bill because we face a pivotal moment for seniors. Much of the Great Resignation is better described as a Great Retirement; a recent CNN report found that 90 percent of Americans who are opting out of the labor market are over age 55. This early exit from the workforce, compounded with rising costs of living, diminished savings, and elevated health concerns could easily become a **perfect storm for senior hunger**, a storm that could go on for decades.

This storm will only get worse if we continue the recent trend of retreating to our corners. The close and regular communication I described at the outset of the pandemic has begun to flag, with individual organizations and agencies turning to other projects and priorities instead of coordinating efforts and bringing all our resources to bear. That's exactly the opposite of what we need right now given the looming 'Silver Tsunami' of older adults who will need more food, and better food, for longer periods of time.

DC has a model of how thoughtful legislation can spark enduring, collaborative work between District agencies, Federal programs, nonprofits, businesses, and advocates to drive lasting changes in our food system that reduce hunger and improve public health. We've seen it in our schools through the Healthy Schools Act and the many partners who have helped make DC a national leader in school nutrition over the past 12 years. No Senior Hungry builds on that same set of principles while centering senior voices and relevant experts.

We don't have to lead the nation in senior hunger anymore. Today, we can choose to lead the nation in solving it.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today as part of this critical conversation and I welcome the chance to answer any questions.

Testimony to Committee on Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization
February 14, 2022 at 10am (5 minutes)
Marian Peele, Senior Director of CSFP, Capital Area Food Bank

Good morning Chairwoman Bonds, committee members, and colleagues,

My name is Marian Peele, and I am the Senior Director of the Commodity Supplemental Food Program at the Capital Area Food Bank (CSFP). Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of the No Senior Hungry Omnibus Act, and for your consideration of the bill.

The Capital Area Food Bank is the sole Feeding America food bank serving DC and has been a leader in hunger relief for 42 years in our community. We serve the more than 81,000 DC residents facing food insecurity. As you well know, that includes nearly 12,000 seniors who struggle to access their next meal.

I have worked at the food bank for more than 31 years, and I oversee our Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). This federal nutrition program supplements the nutritional needs of low-income seniors. Last year, we served over 1 million meals to DC Seniors through this program.

In my role, I get to see the good, the bad, and the worst of senior hunger.

The good is every single courageous client we serve. The compassion seniors express for our staff and for each other at distribution sites, the waves from windows to our delivery drivers, and the smiling faces despite hungry stomachs. We are privileged to serve such an outstanding senior community.

But, I also get to see the bad: the seniors who are homebound and simply can't access emergency food services; the increased chronic illnesses our seniors face because they lack nutritious meals; and the miles upon miles that our seniors have to travel just to buy affordable groceries. These are the terrible and detrimental impacts of senior hunger.

And, I get to see the worst of senior hunger. Unfortunately, every one of us here today gets to see the worst of senior hunger because DC has the highest rate of senior food insecurity in the entire country. Fourteen point three (14.3) percent of our seniors do not have consistent access to nutritious food. That means one in every seven seniors in our nation's capital is facing hunger.

We know hunger takes a disproportionate toll for our communities of color and seniors residing in Wards 7 and 8. Hunger is the result of years of injustice, racism, and neglect. And, for our seniors, we must do better.

The No Senior Hungry Omnibus Act is a step in the right direction. The legislation was crafted thoughtfully by many stakeholders in this community who have the deepest of roots. And the Capital Area Food Bank recommends you heed our advice for the sake of our seniors.

First and foremost, the bill would increase our seniors' access to food and resources. It expands participation in SNAP, CACFP, home-delivered meals, and medical nutrition therapy.

This bill will make it easier for seniors to understand what services are available to them by encouraging DC agencies to communicate the programs and benefits at their disposal. And, importantly, this bill will ensure that addressing senior hunger is a coordinated, centralized, and thoughtful effort in the District. The creation of an Interagency Task Force will provide a level of community input and accountability that is much needed and long overdue.

One thing is certain - the nation's capital should not have the worst levels of senior food insecurity in the nation. Together, we have the opportunity to change that, and I urge you to pass the No Senior Hungry Omnibus Bill so all of our seniors can access the foods they need today for brighter futures tomorrow.

Thank you.

To whom it may concern:

I live in Ward 4 and would like to express my support for the No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021 up for consideration by the DC Council.

I believe passage of this act is an important part of addressing food insecurity amongst DC seniors. In particular, meal-delivery services should be added to Medicaid home health care services, which is what 41 other states already have. This is essential because some seniors cannot prepare their own meals. Moreover, the need is urgent since - reportedly - only half of eligible low-income DC seniors receive SNAP benefits.

My thanks to the Council Members who proposed this Act. I hope it is swiftly approved.

Sincerely,

Melissa Phillips
6445 Luzon Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20012

**Testimony Submitted to the Committee on
Housing and Executive Administration**

**Public Hearing of
Bill B24-0419, the “No Senior Hungry Omnibus
Amendment Act of 2021”**

Monday, February 14, 2022

Submitted by:

Linda B. Popejoy, Esq.

Managing Attorney, Pro Bono Access to Justice Practice

Legal Counsel for the Elderly, an affiliate of AARP

601 E Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20049

202-434-2068

I. Introduction

Greetings Chairperson Bonds and members and staff of the Committee on Housing and Executive Administration. My name is Linda Popejoy, and I am the Managing Attorney of the Pro Bono Access to Justice Practice at Legal Counsel for the Elderly (“LCE”), an affiliate of AARP. LCE champions the dignity and rights of senior citizens in the District of Columbia by providing free and comprehensive legal and social work services to older D.C. residents. For more than 45 years, LCE has been committed to empowering, defending, and protecting vulnerable District residents aged 60 and older. LCE improves the lives of 10,000 D.C. seniors each year through direct client services, advocacy, and outreach.

I and several other LCE staff participated in the No Senior Hungry Working Group organized by Councilmember Mary Cheh. We participated in several meetings with the working group over the course of the first half of last year. We have continued to engage in discussions regarding the best practices for aiding District seniors who struggle with food insecurity. I am grateful for this opportunity to share information with the Committee on this important issue, and to voice LCE’s support for this important bill.

II. LCE’s Experience with Food Insecurity

The LCE attorneys that handle public benefits matters and our Legal Hotline staff regularly encounter clients facing food insecurity, and we are frequently called on for assistance with SNAP benefits, so that will be the primary focus of this testimony. Often, District seniors have trouble applying for or renewing their SNAP benefits due to the onerous application and recertification processes. Some of our clients conclude that it is not even worth the effort to

apply for SNAP benefits because of both the typically very low level of benefits, and the extensive documentation that is required at both the initial application stage and at the time of recertification. Indeed, many of our clients (outside of the pandemic) only receive about \$30 in monthly benefits. Most of our clients receive less than the maximum benefit because they do have some limited income, e.g., SSI. This does not mean, however, that our clients can afford healthy food. And, many of our clients have more complicated (and often expensive) diets due to medical conditions such as diabetes.

A common issue for our senior clients is that they miss the deadline for recertification and have their benefits cut off as a result. Many clients report not receiving a notice regarding recertification at all. Others misunderstand the notice because the language of the notice and the recertification forms can be difficult to comprehend. Some clients face additional barriers if they are not able to read or write or they receive the notice in something other than their native language. Still other clients may simply forget that they need to recertify. As an example, one of our clients with memory issues forgot to recertify and called LCE when he stopped receiving SNAP benefits, thinking they had been terminated. One of our attorneys was able to help him get back on the program and when he found out, the client cried with gratitude that he would again be able to buy vegetables.

We often hear from elderly clients who are on the verge of getting evicted, or whose homes are up for a tax sale or who are facing some other large, life-altering crisis, and the last thing they are worried about is completing the daunting process of ensuring they receive their SNAP benefits. As mentioned above, the amount of benefits is quite low for many of our clients. Although SNAP benefits were increased during the pandemic, we understand that those benefits have already started being reduced to pre-pandemic rates. In some cases, the post-pandemic

allotment of SNAP benefits is even less than their pre-pandemic allotment. This is very distressing for clients who truly struggle to put food on the table every day.

Our clients also face challenges with getting to grocery stores due to mobility issues, lack of transportation, or living in food deserts. Clients have also reported a lack of response when contacting DHS. Clients turn to other non-profit or social service agencies just to apply for SNAP benefits or to find out the status of their SNAP application. At the DHS centers, information is not available in other languages and non-native English speakers are sometimes treated in a disrespectful manner.

The issues LCE sees with its older clients and food insecurity are sadly not surprising given that D.C. ranks number one among the states for overall senior hunger and food insecurity and ranks number six for very low food security, according to Feeding America's Annual State of Senior Hunger in America Report. This means that older residents in D.C. suffer from food insecurity at a rate higher than anywhere else in the country. And while food insecurity is detrimental to everyone it impacts, food insecurity has heightened consequences for seniors, as adequate nutrition is essential to the prevention and management of chronic health conditions, and as food insecurity and malnutrition are linked to medication nonadherence, potentially increasing complications in disease treatment and management. Now is the time to address this crisis for our seniors.

III. Suggestions for Improvement

While LCE absolutely supports the passage of the "No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021," we believe this bill could do more to address the crisis at hand. LCE fully and strongly supports all efforts to address issues of food insecurity among older residents

of the District. Yet while this bill proposes some beneficial tactics for combatting food insecurity in the target population, we believe the bill needs to do more to provide timely and effective assistance to the District's seniors. In this testimony, I make two recommendations that will strengthen the bill and consequently advance food security in the District.

A. Shorter Deadlines

First, the bill's deadline for the preparation of a Senior Food Security Plan and a related senior nutrition services communications plan, July 1, 2023, is too far in the future. We recommend a much shorter turnaround for the plans to be developed, particularly considering that the No Senior Hungry Working Group has already compiled much of the information necessary for the preparation of these plans. We recommend setting a **deadline for the Food Security Plan and communications plan of no more than *six months* from the date the bill is passed**. We further recommend an earlier date for the provision of an annual progress report to the Mayor and Council on the progress of the Senior Food Security Plan, as the current bill does not require a progress report until 2025. **An initial report *six months* after the publishing of the plans would be an appropriate deadline, with annual reports thereafter.**

B. SNAP/SSI Combined Eligibility System

Second, the District should adopt a system already utilized by seventeen other states, including our neighboring states of Maryland and Virginia, in which individuals are deemed automatically eligible for SNAP based on their enrollment in SSI. According to the Food Research & Access Center, though most SSI recipients are categorically eligible for SNAP, seniors have historically had low participation rates. A variety of factors contribute to this trend, namely the difficulties of navigating the SNAP application process and subsequently, the

recertification process. Indeed, LCE frequently hears from seniors that the burdens of applying for and recertifying for SNAP far outweigh the value of the benefits received. Low senior participation in SNAP only exacerbates senior hunger, as SSI benefits are modest, leaving SSI recipients who do not receive SNAP at risk of hunger. Yet we know, based on the data, that a combined application process with automatic eligibility will work to increase overall SNAP participation.

As part of our effort to explore ways to increase and modernize SNAP benefit enrollment in the District, my colleagues and I met with New York Hunger Solutions, a nonprofit in Albany, New York, that works to eliminate food insecurity in their respective state. In meeting with NY Hunger Solutions, we learned of the New York State Nutrition Improvement Project (NYSNIP), an active program which automatically enrolls SSI live-alone recipients into SNAP. This program requires no separate applications or verifications, nor interviews, for elderly SSI recipients to receive SNAP benefits; once an elderly constituent becomes an SSI recipient, they are automatically enrolled into the SNAP program, and their EBT cards are promptly mailed to them. We also learned that, in New York, there has been a collaborative effort to share and review data between the state's SNAP office and the Social Security Administration. This sharing of information, in particular, the review of special coding from the State Data Exchange, or SDX, which is a data sharing system utilized by all states and the District, has been essential to ensuring that eligible elderly SSI recipients receive SNAP benefits with reduced barriers. Since its implementation in 2004, this program generated 90,000 new SNAP cases in its initial year alone, and it has yielded higher SNAP participation since then. Not only has this program allowed for higher access to SNAP benefits, but in turn, it has also created greater efficiency in the NY state SNAP office: there are less applications to process, less clients to call for interviews

or missed interviews, and a reduction in case closures due to verifications not being submitted on a timely basis. This program has proven to be a win not only for New York constituents, but also for the state of New York. The District should implement a similarly simplified and streamlined process for its seniors.

Other states that have implemented a combined application process have seen an overall increase of 48 percent in SNAP participation among one-person SSI households between 2000 and 2008. In South Carolina, the state with the nation's longest running combined application process, almost 80 percent of new SSI applicants reported that the SNAP application process was "easy" or "neither easy nor hard." This data is extremely promising, showing that a combined application process will combat accessibility issues and provide more District seniors with the opportunity to receive the benefits they are eligible for. Additionally, streamlining the automatic process will generate another positive outcome for DC's economy, as according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, when an individual uses one dollar of SNAP benefits, they generate \$1.70 in economic activity. Although we understand that this bill is already proposing a simplified application process for seniors, we see no reason not to go a step further and require no SNAP application at all for seniors who already have been found eligible for SSI benefits. Doing so will increase both SNAP participation and efficiency within the District's SNAP program.

IV. Conclusion

LCE supports the passage of the "No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021" but believes the suggestions presented here will strengthen the bill so that it can more effectively fight food insecurity for our older residents. Thank you for considering this testimony.

Written Testimony of Kenlee Ray

Dupont Circle Village Member

Committee on Housing & Executive Administration Performance Oversight Hearing

February 14, 2022

Re: B24-0419 – No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021

My name is Kenlee Ray and I have been a Ward 2 resident for 44 years.

Thank you for holding this hearing. I especially want to thank Councilmember Cheh for her leadership in organizing task forces to examine DC senior food insecurity and subsequently introducing B24-0419, along with its co-sponsors Councilmembers Gray, George, Allen, Henderson, Pinto, and White.

I was shocked to learn that DC has the sad distinction of being no. 1 in food insecurity for seniors in the US and that the percentage of DC seniors who are food insecure has jumped from 9.6% in 2016 to 15% today.

After reading more about the reasons for senior food insecurity in DC and listening to the witnesses on February 14 there seem to be several causes of the problem but the overarching one appears to be that no one is in charge. Responsibility for addressing senior food insecurity cuts across DC agencies and no one agency has ownership. Establishing and funding an Interagency Senior Food Insecurity Task Force led by DACL is an important first step.

I would compare the current city approach to senior food insecurity to a huge jigsaw puzzle on the dining room table that family members walk by and work on for a few minutes. Some of the sections have been completed and work quite well; other pieces have fallen on the floor; some pieces are missing. Someone needs to take charge and finally put the puzzle together.

As a member of the Dupont Circle Village, I appreciate what our volunteers already do to keep our members from becoming food insecure. These measures include dropping off meals when a member becomes housebound or providing transportation to grocery stores.

After hearing that many of the seniors eligible for food assistance don't know about what services are available and how to apply for them, it is clear that an effective communications/outreach plan, such as the Senior Nutrition Services Communications Plan described in the proposed legislation, is needed. The DC Village network became extremely effective at sharing information and programs during the pandemic with their members as well as with other DC seniors and that network would be effective partners in getting the word out about food resources available to seniors.

DC seniors with limited incomes shouldn't have to choose which of their basic needs they are going to fund from month to month. Nothing is more basic than having enough to eat. I urge the Council to quickly pass the "No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021"

Dear DC City Council Members:

I live in Washington, DC in Ward and am writing to support the No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021. I am concerned about the food-insecure seniors in DC. Only half of eligible low-income seniors now are receiving SNAP benefits, so urgent action is needed.

This bill is common sense. It requires the DC government to set up a taskforce to come up with a plan to improve outreach to seniors and address food insecurity. The bill also calls for meal-delivery services to be added to Medicaid home health care services, which is what 41 other states already have. This is important because some disabled people cannot prepare their own meals.

Here are a few suggestions for improving the bill.

1. **The bill should cover both seniors and disabled people younger than age 60.**
2. **The bill should state that the taskforce needs to develop a budget to implement its recommendations and indicate whether Department of Aging and Community Living needs additional funds to address senior food insecurity.**
3. **The bill should clarify that assessment of nutritional needs also should include consideration of whether seniors are able to order grocery services online and pay for grocery delivery services.** Providing access to Internet, providing instructions on how to order food online, and providing a supplement to cover the cost of delivery fees may be very helpful in getting food to low-income seniors or disabled people younger than age 60 who are unable to shop at grocery stores in person.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I am pleased that DC City Council members proposed this bill.

Sincerely,
Nancy Shiner
4530 Connecticut Ave NW
Washington, DC 20008

TESTIMONY OF **MICHELE A. TINGLING-CLEMMONS**, PRESIDENT OF *CENTRAL NORTH EAST CIVIC ASSOCIATION (CNECA)* & CO-CONVENOR, *GRAY PANTHERS OF METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON (GPMW)*

BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING & EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATION, CITY COUNCIL, DISTRICT
OF COLUMBIA ON

Bill #24-0419 “NO SENIOR HUNGRY” OMNIBUS LEGISLATION
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2022

GREETINGS COMMITTEE CHAIR ANITA BONDS, OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS, SISTER/FELLOW RESIDENTS. IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO SPEAK THIS MORNING IN SUPPORT OF THIS LEGISLATION, AND TO SAY THAT WE SUPPORT IMPLEMENTING IT WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY SINCE HUNGER DOESN'T WAIT, AND OUR SENIORS SHOULD NOT BE SUBJECTED TO THE PAIN OF HUNGER IN THE WINTER OF THEIR, OF OUR LIVES.

IN MARCH OF 2018, CENTRAL NORTH EAST CIVIC ASSOCIATION PARTNERED WITH GRAY PANTHERS AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE ANTI-HUNGER COMMUNITY TO CONVENE ***THE WHY CONFERENCE: FOOD JUSTICE AND OUR RIGHT TO FOOD – THE FIGHT AGAINST HUNGER***. ATTENDED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF ANTI-HUNGER ADVOCATES, EMERGENCY FOOD PROVIDERS, FARMERS/COMMUNITY GROWERS, GROCERS/FOOD DISTRIBUTORS, CONSUMERS, INTERESTED RESIDENTS AND ACTIVISTS, THE CONFERENCE POSED THE SEMINAL AND FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS, “WHY IN THE WORLD’S WEALTHIEST NATION DOES HUNGER EVEN EXIST? FURTHER, IF WE, THE WORKING CLASS, MAKE AND PRODUCE EVERYTHING, WHY ARE WE THE HUNGRY?” THE QUESTION WAS EXPLORED AND ANSWERED WITH THE AID OF A PUBLICATION PRODUCED BY THE RENOWNED CALIFORNIA THINK TANK FOOD FIRST, WHOSE BACKGROUNDER ON WORLD HUNGER MYTHS BEGAN BY EXPLAINING THAT

AFTER 40 YEARS RESEARCHING THE ISSUE, THEIR CONCLUSION THAT THE MAIN PROBLEM DEALING WITH HUNGER WAS IN HOW PEOPLE THOUGHT ABOUT IT. THE BACKGROUNDER FURTHER STATED, “*FOOD SCARCITY IS NOT THE PROBLEM, BUT THE SCARCITY OF REAL DEMOCRACY PROTECTING PEOPLE’S ACCESS TO NUTRITIOUS FOOD IS A HUGE PROBLEM. SO, FIGHTING HUNGER MEANS TACKLING CONCENTRATED POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC POWER IN ORDER TO CREATE NEW EQUITABLE RULES. OTHERWISE HUNGER WILL CONTINUE NO MATTER HOW MUCH FOOD WE GROW.*” (EXCERPTED FROM **BACKGROUNDER, WORLD HUNGER: TEN MYTHS** BY FOOD FIRST CO-FOUNDERS FRANCES MOORE LAPPÉ & JOSEPH COLLINS).

THE ANSWER TO THE WHY QUESTION DEVELOPED BY THE CONFERENCE WAS THAT HUNGER EXISTS AS THE RESULT OF FOOD BEING COMMODIFIED AS A FOR-PROFIT INDUSTRY, UNDER THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM OF PUBLIC PRODUCTION FOR PRIVATE EXPROPRIATION, BEST KNOWN AS CAPITALISM, WHICH PROFITS FROM PEOPLE BEING HUNGRY. AND, PEOPLE ARE HUNGRY NOT JUST BECAUSE THEY DON’T HAVE ENOUGH MONEY, BUT ALSO BECAUSE THIS EXPLOITATIVE ECONOMIC SYSTEM NEEDS HUNGRY WORKERS TO FRIGHTEN THE REST OF US ABOUT WHAT COULD BE IN STORE FOR US, TO GET US TO WORK FOR NOTHING – LIKE, DURING THE 2019 GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN. AND, PEOPLE LACK ENOUGH MONEY TO MEET THEIR NEEDS FOR A MYRIAD OF REASONS: THEIR JOBS DON’T PAY ENOUGH TO MEET THEIR NEEDS (NO LIVING WAGE); THEY ARE UNEMPLOYED AND DON’T RECEIVE SUPPORT TO MEET THEIR NEEDS (INADEQUATE SUPPORT FOR THE UNEMPLOYED); THEY ARE HOMELESS/UNHOUSED (NO AFFORDABLE HOUSING POLICY); AN ILLNESS HAS TAKEN SO MUCH OF THEIR FUNDS THEY CAN’T AFFORD HEALTHY, NUTRITIOUS FOOD (NO

UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE); AND MANY OTHER CHALLENGES BROUGHT ON AND/OR COMPLICATED BY THE CHAOS OF CAPITALISM. THIS IS TRUE FOR ALL OF OUR SOCIAL NEEDS – HOUSING, HEALTH CARE, EDUCATION, WATER, ENERGY, ETC.

THIS LEGISLATION IS OVERDUE, AND THE PLAN IS CRITICAL, COMPREHENSIVE AND TIMELY. IT SHOULD INVOLVE A PLETHORA OF SENIORS TO REPRESENT THIS POPULATION THAT IS DIVERSE, BROAD, AND MORE THAN CONSUMERS, ARE FREQUENTLY SKILLED AS A RESULT OF LIVING LONG. WHILE WE MIGHT NEED COMMUNICATION THAT GOES BEYOND SENDING A TWEET, AN EMAIL, AN INSTAGRAM POST, TEXT, TIKTOK, OR ANY OF THE SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS CURRENTLY SO POPULAR, IT WILL BE WORTH IT. THIS PLAN SHOULD INCLUDE SUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO REACH OUR SENIORS WITH PAPER FLYERS OR OTHER COMMUNIQUE; IT SHOULD BE LARGE PRINT, AND INVOLVE GREATER FORMS OF PERSONAL, RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATIONS. USING DISTRICT CABLE AND OTHER BROAD INFO BLASTS LIKE ROBOCALLS MAY BE FAR MORE EFFECTIVE THAN EMAILS – OR PERHAPS WE SHOULD EXPLORE DOING ALL OF THEM! VISITING EACH OF THE SENIOR DEVELOPMENTS; SETTING UP SESSIONS TARGETING ELDERS THROUGH THE HOUSING COMPLEXES, SENIOR CENTERS, & ARRANGING TRANSPORTATION AND/OR REMOTE LINKS TO ENSURE THAT SENIOR INPUT IS BROADLY SOLICITED AND ALL EFFORTS ARE EXTENDED TO SECURE THEIR INTEREST AND INVOLVEMENT TO THE BEST POSSIBLE EXTENT OF THE AGENCIES.

IDENTIFYING AND SUPPORTING GROCERY OPTIONS THAT GO BEYOND PROMISING VENDORS OR POTENTIAL GROCERS THAT THEY WILL MAKE PROFITS OFF OF US WHEN THE CITY IS WORKING SO HARD AT GENTRIFYING ELDERS & OTHERS,

(ESPECIALLY IF WE'RE POOR!) OUT OF THE CITY (ESPECIALLY WARD 7) WOULD BE A TERRIFIC EFFORT TO SUPPORT AS A MODEL.

WE URGE YOU AS A BODY TO NOT ONLY PASS, BUT TO IMPLEMENT THIS LEGISLATION. SOME OF US RECALL SUCH LEGISLATION THAT WAS PASSED OVER 20 YEARS AGO, THOUGH NOT TARGETTING SENIORS, BUT COUNCILMEMBER CRAWFORD NEVER IMPLEMENTED NOR MOVED TO FUND IT. WE URGE YOU TO MOVE FORWARD WITH ALL DUE SPEED TO MAKE ***No SENIOR HUNGRY*** JUST THE START OF THE DISTRICT MAKING A SERIOUS START AT BUILDING A JURISDICTION COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT NO PERSON LIVING HERE, IN THIS NATION'S CAPITOL, GOES HUNGRY.

THIS IS OUR HOME; WE ARE CAPABLE; IF WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO WORKING TOGETHER TO MAKE THIS A REALITY, THERE IS LITTLE WE CAN'T DO, UNTIL THE SYSTEM KNOWN AS CAPITALISM THROUGH ITS VARIOUS AGENCIES COMES DOWN ON OUR EFFORTS; THEN WE REGROUP AND CONTINUE OUR WORK. REGARDLESS, THIS BILL IS A THOROUGH EFFORT TO DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE, EFFECTIVE, AND INFORMED PLAN TO ADDRESS A PROBLEM WE KNOW **MUST** BE ADDRESSED, AND RESOLVED TO OUR SATISFACTION.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR EFFORTS TO DATE, AND FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT. WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE BILL'S PASSAGE AND COMMIT TO WORKING WITH YOU TO RESOLVE THIS PROBLEM, AS WE SHOW OUR CARING BY WORKING TO ENSURE THAT THERE WILL BE ***No SENIOR HUNGRY*** ON OUR WATCH, IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, OUR BELOVED HOME; AND TO FURTHER SHARE ANY INNOVATIONS WE DISCOVER WITH OTHERS HOPING TO RESOLVE SIMILAR PROBLEMS WHERE THEY LIVE.

Testimony for the No Senior Hungry Amendment Act, February 14, 2022

Good morning. Thank you Councilmember Anita Bonds for holding this hearing today.

My name is Dennis Way and I live in Ward 8.

My personal reasons for caring about this issue are because food security is a tremendous issue in my area and we need help. I know people next door who we share food with because they don't get enough. With your help, I think our seniors will live longer and be more healthy.

The bill will provide a lot of help for a lot of people. You can see the changes it makes with the little help you can get. If you pass the bill, it would be an even bigger help, I guarantee that. It would release funds for people to get better produce and better quality food. I think this would also help people learn what they can get access to and where they can find help.

My only concern is that the services get to the right people who actually need this help.

Thank you for listening and yes, I agree 100% with making this legislation a law. This would help me and I'm sure this would help hundreds of people in Ward 8. Everybody knows Ward 8 is one of the hardest hit sections of the city. I welcome the bill and I'm sure other seniors would, too.



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**Testimony of Joan Williams, Senior Director, Senior Services
SOME, Inc. (So Others Might Eat)
To the Committee on Housing & Executive Administration
B24-0419 – No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021
February 14, 2022**

Greetings Councilmember Bonds and members of the Committee. My name is Joan Williams, and I am Senior Director of Senior Services at SOME, Inc. (also known as So Others Might Eat). Thank you for the opportunity to give this testimony in support of Bill B24-0419, No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021, commonly referred to as the "No Senior Hungry Bill." SOME believes that our city has the resources and infrastructure in place to ensure that every senior has daily access to healthy food, and we believe that this bill will improve communication, coordination and referrals, data-collection, planning and implementation to help make this a reality. We have some suggestions that we hope will strengthen the bill as well.

SOME is an interfaith, nonprofit organization that for over 50 years has provided comprehensive services to our District neighbors who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. In 1983, SOME began offering essential senior programs specifically for isolated, at risk, and low-income seniors. These services include:

- SOME's **Senior Center**, which offers daily wellness activities, health literacy programming, and monthly food delivery to over 100 isolated seniors.
- The **Homebound Senior Program** provides case management to isolated seniors in wards 6, 7, and 8.
- Most crucial is **Kuehner Place**, the District's only temporary housing placement for abused, neglected, and exploited seniors.

In addition to DACL funded programs, SOME Senior Services operates **Kuehner House**, which provides 42 permanent affordable housing units to low-income seniors. Additionally, SOME opened its second permanent housing building for seniors called **Karin House** in 2021. Located on the historic Walter Reed campus, Karin House provides efficiency apartments to 40 low-income District seniors and is occupied by SOME Senior Services' most vulnerable clients who not only meet the criteria for all senior service programs but who have experienced homelessness and need intensive case management and stabilization services.

SOME supports the passage and full funding of Bill B24-0419, the No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021, and we have the following comments and recommendations that we hope will enhance the bill's effectiveness:

- First, regarding the Interagency Senior Food Insecurity Taskforce, SOME recommends increasing the number of proposed senior members. As written, the bill only requires that two of the thirteen members be seniors. Persons most impacted by the issue of senior hunger should be in the strongest position to help recommend solutions. Additionally, SOME recommends that the members of the taskforce represent living and/or working in every ward of our city. This promotes equity and inclusion and ensures that every senior is truly represented by this taskforce. SOME also strongly encourages the Council to put stronger measures in the bill to urge this taskforce to be effective in implementing the aims of this taskforce.
- Second, SOME would like to emphasize the importance of Section 312(3)(C) which states that the Senior Food Security Plan should "Recommend strategies to improve the nutritional quality of foods served to seniors, including increasing the amount of local fresh produce provided by congregate meals, home-delivered meals, and food boxes under the Emergency Food Assistance Program, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, and other nutrition

services programs.” This is essential because serving seniors certain foods can be extremely dangerous due to the prevalence of chronic health conditions, such as diabetes and hypertension, where what you eat can physically prolong your life or shorten it. In our own SOME Senior Center, seniors have expressed concerns about the congregate meals containing too much sugar or too much sodium. They have expressed similar concerns about the home-delivered meals. We must make sure that as we seek to end senior hunger, we do it with the special nutritional needs of our seniors always in mind.

- Third, it is well known that food insecurity for seniors can be highly attributed to social isolation and a lack of coordinated care between the different government and nongovernmental partners. For years, we have talked about combatting social isolation but seem to have made little progress in implementing effective solutions. SOME believes that there are great ideas outlined in Section 310, the “Seniors communications plan.” We would recommend that mailers be sent at least twice a year, rather than annually. We also hope that the annual training for government employees will include teaching how to easily screen for food insecurity by asking only a couple of questions. DACL should not be the only agency consistently doing such screening.
- Last, barriers such as poverty, a lack of transportation, limited access to internet devices and broadband internet, mobility issues, physical injuries, illnesses, reduced cognition, and the complexity of application processes all impact a senior’s ability to healthy meals every day. And we know that these barriers are most prevalent for Black seniors living in Wards 7 and 8, where it is also the most difficult to find affordable and nutritious foods throughout the wards. Therefore, to be most effective, this bill must assess and propose strategies that address how racial inequities create and perpetuate senior hunger in D.C. SOME recommends that the Council work with the Council on Racial Equity to better to respond to senior hunger through a racial equity lens. We also recommend that DACL and the Interagency Senior Food Insecurity Taskforce be required to work with the DC Office on Equity in its planning and implementation of the various components of this bill.

SOME thanks you for the opportunity to offer these comments. SOME also shows gratitude to Councilmember Mary Cheh and our senior provider and community partners for giving us the opportunity to participate in the No Senior Hungry work group sessions that led to the creation of this bill.



Testimony of AARP DC State Office
Hearing for B24-0419 – No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021
Committee on Housing and Executive Administration Performance
Submitted February 14, 2022

Background:

On behalf of the AARP DC State Office, my name is Virgil Young, AARP DC Volunteer Ward Liaison. AARP appreciates the opportunity to provide written testimony on the proposed “No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021.” While AARP supports this legislation, we urge you to also include additional elements that would strengthen the bill and its impact on the food insecure Washingtonians.

According to DC Greens, the District has the highest rate of food insecurity among seniors in the country, currently at 14.3%¹. This means more than 12,000 known District seniors lack consistent access to enough food. Additionally, seniors are known to have higher rates of food insecurity due to a variety of factors. This includes fixed incomes, food deserts, accessibility to healthy food options, and social isolation.² Senior food insecurity is a crisis in the District and it must be addressed.

The pandemic provided an opportunity for the District, including the government agencies, to hone policies and procedures and improve service models for older adults. Food Insecurity has been exasperated by the public health crisis. While there are 14 nutrition programs operating in the District, the pandemic unfortunately proved there is little coordination between programs and little oversight to ensure needs of older adults are being met.

Support for the “No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021”:

In 2021, AARP DC was a part of a six-meeting workgroup which resulted in the proposed “No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021”. Some of the positive elements of this act would include:

- Establishing an Interagency Senior Food Insecurity Task Force
- Requiring Department on Aging and Community Living (DACL) to establish and implement a Senior Food Insecurity Plan
- Requiring DACL to develop a Senior Communications Plan
- A complete overhaul of DACL Nutrition Services
- Requiring Department of Human Services (DHS) to increase SNAP participation
- Requiring the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) to increase adult day care participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- Expanding the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities (EPD) Waiver to include Home-Delivered Meals, Nutrition Supplements, and Medical Nutrition Therapy, a suggestion AARP DC has been pushing for years.³

¹ (Hutson 2022)

² (Hutson 2022)

³ (Hutson 2022)



While AARP DC supports the proposed legislation, there are significant opportunities for improvement to the bill and to nutrition services overall.

Recommended Improvements to “No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021”:

While AARP DC supports existing components of the proposed legislation, we urge the Council to ensure accountability measures are put in place to support implementation of the bill. AARP DC urges the following changes to the legislation:

- Requiring a NEW Interagency Senior Food Taskforce, not simply be duplicative of current ineffective nutrition workgroups within District Agencies. This taskforce should include government agencies, community organizations with specific expertise in food hunger, and constituents that represent older adults 50+. These representatives should be vetted through specific criteria. The Task Force recommendations should not only guide but be the floor for performance for nutrition- services.
- Setting a June 2022 deadline for DACL to deliver on a Senior Food Insecurity Plan with quantitative and qualitative metrics.
- Requiring quarterly reports and oversight hearings for respective agencies to review community outreach, meals provided, efforts to meet specialty diet needs, and spending towards the established plan.
- Auto-enrolling current and new Medicaid enrollees into SNAP, including the EPD Waiver Program.

Furthermore, access and need for nutrition services is a continued problem. Most notably, this issue was highlighted by Director Laura Newland during DACL’s most recent performance oversight hearing. Furthermore, DACL’s performance oversight filing placed the current rate of senior hunger in the District at 13.5 percent. DACL also reported a 50% increase in home delivered meals within the first month of FY2022, and a substantial increase in congregate meals. This increase represents a growing need amongst District seniors. The District needs a solid plan to fix food insecurity and establish maximum accountability measures to ensure government agencies address this dire issue.⁴

Recent disjointed changes like DACL’s decision to bring nutrition services in house with zero warning or community input can further strain access among District seniors. AARP demands oversight, experts at the table, and community participation to support streamline coordination of all senior nutrition programs.

AARP appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony and offers our assistance with moving this bill forward. We look forward to working with you and continuing to work alongside nutrition advocates to bring the District’s 50+ population better nutrition services. I am available to answer any questions at this time.

⁴ (Office 2022)

Testimony of Karen Zuckerstein
1st Vice Chair, Ward 3 Democratic Committee
before the Committee on Housing & Executive Administration

February 14, 2022

My name is Karen Zuckerstein and I am 1st Vice-Chair of the Ward 3 Democratic Committee. I wish to thank Chairperson Bonds and other members of this Committee for the opportunity to provide testimony on the *No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act*.

By way of background, the Ward 3 Democratic Committee is composed of about 90 Ward 3 Democratic Party activists who are elected from each precinct in Ward 3. Our membership conducts research and formulates positions and recommendations on issues of significance in the District of Columbia.

Seniors in the District struggle to obtain enough food to live a healthy lifestyle. The depth of this problem is such that DC ranks at the top of the food insecurity index put together by Feeding America. This is deeply disturbing, especially given the relative wealth of our community. We cannot ignore this problem.

There are 14 nutrition focused-programs available to DC's older adults.¹ These include programs targeting seniors, such as congregate meals and senior farmers markets, as well as programs that include seniors as part of a broader population such as SNAP. Some programs focus on providing seniors with healthy, nutritious foods.

¹ *The State Older Adults in the District of Columbia, Part II*, The Office of the Budget Director, Council of the District of Columbia, 2020.

The *No Senior Hungry Act* focuses on better defining who are food insecure and identifying root causes. It seeks to answer the question of why existing programs are not reaching food insecure seniors. It calls for examining how District agencies communicate with seniors and addressing how transportation and other challenges affect the ability to access food.

In November, we sent a resolution to every Council member urging adoption of this legislation. It provides a process for better understanding the problem so that existing programs and new initiatives can eliminate food insecurity in the District. There is no reason for any senior to lack access to the food needed to support a healthy life.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to answer any questions.

**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATION
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004

**COUNCILMEMBER ANITA BONDS, CHAIRPERSON
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATION**

ANNOUNCES A PUBLIC HEARING

on the matter of

B24-0419 – No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021

on

Monday, February 14, 2022, at 10:00 AM
Via Zoom

On Monday, February 14, 2022, Councilmember Anita Bonds will hold a public hearing to discuss B24-0419, the “No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021”.

B24-0419, the “No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021” takes on a comprehensive approach to address senior hunger in the District, which includes creating an Interagency Senior Food Insecurity Taskforce made up of relevant agencies and nongovernmental organizations serving seniors. This bill would also require a District-wide communications plan for senior nutrition services, to ensure that we are using all available resources and avenues to connect with isolated seniors in need of programming and support, and require the District to take steps to increase nutrition participation among seniors and include home-delivered meals and medical nutrition therapy as covered services under the Medical Waiver for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities.

Persons who wish to testify are requested to either email the Committee at housing@dccouncil.us or telephone the Committee at (202) 724-8198, at least two business days before the hearing and provide their name, address, telephone number, email address, organizational affiliation and title, if any. Each witness will receive an individual Zoom invitation for the hearing in a separate e-mail. Witnesses are encouraged to submit an electronic version of their testimony to housing@dccouncil.us. Oral testimony will be limited to 5 minutes for those testifying on behalf of an organization and 3 minutes for those testifying on behalf of themselves.

All Councilmembers will receive an individual Zoom invitation for the hearing in a separate email. If a Councilmember does not have a separate link, please contact Aimellia Siemson at asiemson@dccouncil.us.

The hearing can be viewed on the Committee on Housing and Executive Administration YouTube(www.youtube.com/channel/UCgy5EojaMYGtwicWSfg9NeA) .

Witnesses who anticipate needing language interpretation or require sign language interpretation are encouraged to inform the Committee of the need as soon as possible but no later than five business days before the proceeding. The Committee will make every effort to fulfill timely requests, however requests received in less than five business days may not be fulfilled and alternatives may be offered.

If someone is unable to testify at the public hearing, written statements are encouraged and will be made a part of the official record. Written statements should be submitted to the Committee on Housing and Executive Administration, John A. Wilson Building, 1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Suite 116, Washington, D.C. 20004 or by email at housing@dccouncil.us. The record will close at 5:00 p.m. on February 21, 2022.

**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATION
PUBLIC HEARING**
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004

**COUNCILMEMBER ANITA BONDS, CHAIRPERSON
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATION**

PUBLIC HEARING

on the matter of

B24-0419 – No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2021

on

Monday, February 14, 2022, at 10:00 AM

Via Zoom

<https://dccouncil-us.zoom.us/j/92386688373?pwd=b3RzUHl1cnBSSldRelNTWWxYSysrZz09>

YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgy5EojaMYGtwicWSfg9NeA>)

- I. CALL TO ORDER**
- II. OPENING REMARKS**
- III. PUBLIC WITNESSES**

PANEL 1

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 1. Alexander Moore | Chief Dev. Officer, DC Central Kitchen |
| 2. Winnie Huston | Food Policy Strategist, DC Greens |
| 3. Ms. Bea Evans | Public Witness |
| 4. Becca Kahn | Nutrition Services Director, Food & Friends |
| 5. Virgil Young | Volunteer Award Liaison, AARP DC |

PANEL 2

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6. George Kerr III | Founder & CEO, GIII Associates LLC |
| 7. Alexis Blackmon | Executive Director, Casa Ruby |
| 8. Marian Peele | Senior Dir. of Commodity Supplement, Capital Area Food Bank |
| 9. Andra Henderson | Public Witness |
| 10. Wanda Dudley | Public Witness |

PANEL 3

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 11. Karen Zuckerstein | 1 st Vice Chair, Ward 3 Democrats |
| 12. Dorothy Douglas | Commissioner, SMD 7D03 |
| 13. Michele Tingling-Clemmons | President, Central Northeast Civic Assoc. |
| 14. Raymond Tolson | Public Witness |
| 15. Melissa Jensen | Anti-Hunger Policy Analyst, DC Hunger Solutions |

PANEL 4

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 16. Linda Popejoy | Managing Attorney, Legal Counsel for the Elderly |
| 17. Fleurian Filkins | Fellow, Congressional Hunger Center |
| 18. Shane Johnson | Program Manager, Care Network DC |
| 19. Adofo Salim | Commissioner, ANC 8C |
| 20. Dr. Beverley Wheeler | Director, DC Hunger Solutions |

PANEL 5

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 21. Martha Assefa | Outreach Associate, DC Hunger Solutions |
| 22. Kathy Pointer | Director, Kingdom Care Village |
| 23. Joan Williams | Senior Director, So Others May Eat |
| 24. Lucie Leblois | Co-Founder, DC Food Project |
| 25. Alys MacClellan | Co-Founder, DC Food Project |

PANEL 6

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 26. Carmelita Lacey | Public Witness |
| 27. Frank Finamore | Executive Director, Cleveland & Woodley Village |
| 28. Zachari Curtis | Operations & Resource Dir., Dreaming Out Loud |
| 29. Joon Bang | CEO, IONA Services |

PANEL 7

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 30. Eva Lucero | Executive Director, Dupont Circle Village |
| 31. Shareece Crawford | Public Witness |

IV. GOVERNMENT WITNESSES

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| 1. Laura Newland | Director, DACL |
|------------------|----------------|

V. ADJOURNMENT